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Tribal College Culture-Based Education Impacts American Indian Students In North America

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TRIBAL COLLEGE CULTURE-BASED EDUCATION IMPACTS AMERICAN
INDIAN STUDENTS IN NORTH DAKOTA

By

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A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

Of the

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December
2007

This dissertation, submitted by LoAnn Nelson in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

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December 11, 2007
Date

PERMISSION

Title: Tribal College Culture-Based Education
Impacts American Indian Students in North
Dakota

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Finally, I want to thank my daughters. They are a continual source of strength and support for me

ABSTRACT

Life Circle Tribal College (a pseudonym), as other tribal colleges, claims its purpose for existence is to help increase American Indians' access to affordable and culturally relevant vocational and academic postsecondary education.

This study sought to answer the following questions:

- How did students and staff at Life Circle Tribal College perceive Life Circle Tribal College as fulfilling the cultural portion of its mission?
- What impact did students and staff feel the culture-based education approach used at Life Circle Tribal College had on students' lives in their educational pursuits at the tribal college, in their current and future relationships in the community in which they live, and in their future education and relationships in mainstream colleges and communities outside the reservation?

Participant observations of formal and informal activities, fifteen interviews, and two different surveys were conducted to answer the questions.

Observational results of this study suggested that Life Circle Tribal College attempted to instill values of respect and community in its students through the use of a culture-based environment and approach to education. Results of the interviews and surveys suggested that students and staff appreciated that the opportunity to experience culture-based education was available even if about half of the interviewees did not desire it for themselves. All interviewees felt culture-based education had a direct relationship to the community in encouraging educated American Indians to return to their communities to improve living conditions and preserve the Dakota language. Approximately half of the interviewees felt that successes in mainstream colleges and other relationships off the reservation were more dependent on each individual rather than on having experienced a culture-based education.

The results of this study should lead to ideas for future development of mission statements and course offerings at tribal colleges to ensure that postsecondary education will be culturally relevant to the Dakota and other American Indian students where appropriate and increase students' chances for success in education and throughout life.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1960s, with the beginnings of tribal colleges, a good deal of attention has been paid to lifelong education of American Indians in a manner that would retain American Indian value systems, beliefs, and languages. In 1990, approximately 60 percent of American Indians enrolled in higher education were attending locally controlled tribal colleges (Warner & Hastings, 1991). Imel (2001) states that historically, before tribal colleges, most adult education for American Indians was tied to the goal of assimilation and was aimed toward individual economic improvement. In recent years, adult education for American Indians, with the emergence of tribal colleges, has reflected broader academic goals and has been concerned with playing a role in preserving native languages and cultures rather than encouraging assimilation (Imel, 2001).

Monette (1999) says that tribal colleges succeed with American Indian students that have experienced failure, frustration, and isolation in mainstream institutions because they view students within their cultural, familial,

and community context. In a survey conducted by Boyer (1997), American Indian students said they felt comfortable at the tribal college because it reflected the values of American Indians and because the college had taught them about the history and culture of their reservations and tribes.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a background for the study, a history of the development of Life Circle Tribal College, a need for the study, an explanation of my involvement in Life Circle Tribal College, a definition of terms, and an organizational summary. The pseudonyms used in this study for the tribal college and for the tribal college president are Life Circle Tribal College and Dr. Nadie. In Dakota Sioux, the circle represents the tiyospaye or family circle, the world, the seasons, and cycles of life. The name Nadie is an Indian name meaning wise.

Background

Tribal Colleges began in the 1960s as a result of the American Indian Self-Determination Movement. Congress passed the first Tribal College Act in 1978 to make tribal colleges eligible for federal funding. Since that time, enrollments at tribal colleges have increased by 332

percent (Goetz, 2004). In 2001 White House Executive Order 13021 stated that,

Tribal colleges and universities fulfill a vital role in maintaining and preserving irreplaceable languages and cultural traditions, in offering a high-quality college education to younger American Indian students, and in providing job training and other career-building programs to adults and senior citizens (Selden, 2003, p. 4).

The main purpose for the existence of tribal colleges is to help increase American Indians' access to affordable and culturally-relevant higher education (Cunningham & Redd, 2000). American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) (1999) states that educational attainment for American Indians is lower than educational attainment for the general population. Sixty-five percent of American Indians, ages twenty-five and older, compared to 75 percent of the U.S. population, were high school graduates in 1995. In the same year, the graduation rate for American Indians from more than 300 colleges and universities was only 37 percent. This was the lowest among major ethnic minority groups. College participation, retention, and degree completion therefore remain critical issues for American Indians. (Fann, 2003) states,

The average age of a tribal college student is 30 and women outnumber men. It is estimated that 85 percent of tribal college students live at or below poverty levels, have children and are head of their household,

live at home, have jobs outside of school, and are the first in their families to go to college. More than 40 percent of tribal college graduates pursue further education and another 50 percent find jobs, even in areas of high unemployment (p. 1).

AIHEC was formed by the presidents of the first six tribal colleges. It now represents the thirty-five current tribal colleges. AIHEC offers financial assistance to new and struggling colleges. It also leads efforts in the ongoing development of tribal colleges and conducts extensive research on tribal colleges (AIHEC, 1999).

The tribal college missions are unique from mainstream institutions in that they contain the additional mission to preserve their tribal cultures. The mission statement of Life Circle Tribal College declares the following:

To provide higher education opportunities, at the community college level, including vocational and technical training. The tribal college emphasizes the teaching and learning of Dakota culture and language toward the preservation of the tribe. The goal is student self-sufficiency and independence through academic (and vocational) achievement (AIHEC, 2005, p. 156).

Brown (2003) states the definition of tribal colleges as,

Institutions of higher education that have been formally sanctioned by one or more tribes. Ideally, tribal colleges combine the preservation of tribal history, culture, and traditions with academic preparation, vocational training, and basic adult education (p. 36).

Life Circle Tribal College (2005), as other tribal colleges, strives to provide a learning environment where students can discover how to live in a diverse multicultural society. In order to provide this learning environment, Life Circle Tribal College offers curriculum that allows students the option of preparation for employment in the local job market or continuation to a four-year institution. It also includes many courses in its curriculum for both degree and vocational programs that enable educators to bring the tribal Indian culture to the American Indian students. Courses such as Dakota language, culture, history, literature, tribal government, and art are offered. In all aspects of college study at Life Circle Tribal College, attention is given to maintaining relevancy to the dominant Dakota culture and tradition (Life Circle Tribal College, 2005).

Life Circle Tribal College defines the cultural portion of its mission as more than just beads, feathers, and pow-wows (wacipis), but also as having instructors and staff that have an understanding of the value system, the history, the language, and the unique learning styles of the Dakota people.

Faculty at Life Circle Tribal College are responsible for providing a diverse intellectual experience,

serving the community, and integrating the Dakota culture within the classroom environment. Academic freedom provides faculty members with freedom to teach, utilizing various teaching styles, in their field of competence" (Life Circle Tribal College, 2005, p.64).

Some tribal college graduates say they never would have attended college had it not been for the tribal college in their community. Cunningham and Redd (2000) quote a graduate of Blackfeet Community College, who said,

My mother...graduated in 1993, my niece and I graduated in 1998, two of my sisters will graduate in 1999 and another will graduate in 2000. In addition, three other sisters, my brother and nephew have all attended the Tribal College. If not for the Tribal College, probably only my niece would ever have graduated (p. 9).

Cunningham and Redd (2000) also quote a graduate of Sinte Gleska University in South Dakota, "If it weren't for Sinte Gleska I would still be ignorant of my Lakota culture. This is perhaps the strongest aspect of Tribal Colleges" (p. 2). Another graduate from Salish Kootenai College on the Flathead Reservation in Pablo, Montana said, "The most valuable experience was the curriculum because the instructors integrated the emphasis on American Indian culture with teaching about other cultures" (Cunningham and Redd, 2000, p. 14).

Life Circle Tribal College and the other tribal colleges in the United States and Canada attempt to provide

postsecondary education opportunities with a culture-based approach. AIHEC (1999) reported a 1982 enrollment in tribal colleges of 2,100 that increased to 11,667 in 1990 and 16,689 in the fall of 1996 (AIHEC, 2006).

History of Life Circle Tribal College

A summary of the history of education on the Life Circle Tribal College reservation may make it possible to appreciate the development of Life Circle Tribal College. In 1973, when the public secondary school on the reservation where Life Circle Tribal College is located opened for grades seven through twelve, most students had been living away from home in order to attend high school in nearby communities or more distant boarding schools. Often the children were separated from their families at a young age for most of the school year and the emphasis at most of these schools for Indians was on assimilation and vocational training. In spite of the psychological and social costs for these students attending school away from home to be deprived of their families most of the year and later re-integrated into the Dakota culture, they were often not prepared for postsecondary education.

From the late 1890s to 1935, vocational and industrial training had been offered, on the reservation where Life

Circle Tribal College is located, sporadically to prepare students for manual labor. The Bureau of Indian Affairs Boarding and Day School, on the same reservation, provided elementary and limited high school education focused on vocational education areas between 1939 and 1958. The buildings were deemed unfit for use and the limited high school was discontinued from 1959 to 1973. The first instructors in the late 1800s were a farmer and a blacksmith who were sent to the reservation to teach people how to make a living while being restricted to the land area defined by treaties with the U.S. government. The boys were often taught to be farmers and the girls domestics. This vocational focus on education with a minimum focus on academics continued until the 1970s (Life Circle Tribal College, 2005).

The history of education on the Life Circle Tribal College reservation was similar to what Lomawaima and McCarty (2006) trace as the journey of American Indian education from,

instruction in Native homes and language; through federal incarnations of colonial education; through transfer of educational powers and responsibilities from federal schools to state-supervised public schools; to shared powers with Indian tribes and communities; to the possibilities once again of Indian education being envisioned and implemented both by and for Native people (p. xxiii).

Lomawaima and McCarty use the term "safety-zone" to explain the shifts in federal educational policies that were used to set up boundaries for toleration between safe and dangerous cultural differences. They explained that the changes in educational policies for American Indians illustrate how Natives and non-Natives "competed and cooperated to determine where and when Indigenous cultural practices might be considered benign enough to be allowed, even welcomed, within American life" (p.6).

In the 1970s, tribal leaders across the nation recognized that even the best prepared American Indian students that attended non-Indian colleges dropped out because the stresses associated with moving, adjusting to a non-Indian society, and a new academic environment were just too great. American Indian nations began to develop tribal colleges and universities. The leaders of the tribal nation that surrounds Life Circle Tribal College were successful in having a charter granted in 1974 to establish Life Circle Tribal College. The college began in 1974 with four staff members and one instructor. The curriculum was a secretarial program. Life Circle Tribal College first operated under a bilateral agreement with a nearby community college which, according to the nearby school's

catalog in 1975, offered a two-year liberal arts degree with pre-professional emphasis in several areas and also one-year diplomas and two-year associate of science degrees in several vocational fields including carpentry, agriculture, secretarial, and welding. Life Circle Tribal College became independent in 1980 (Life Circle Tribal College, 2005).

Life Circle Tribal College was named in honor of a proud, fallen warrior of the United States Armed Forces in World War II. He was killed in action in France in 1944 and was the recipient of two Purple Hearts. He believed in "self responsibility and the need for educational opportunity for Native people" (Life Circle Tribal College, 2005, p. 7). To name the college after a fallen warrior was insightful because, as Brown (2003) states, the GI Bill of 1944 had impact on the increased number of American Indians who were given the opportunity to attend college. The GI Bill paid for tuition, fees, books, and supplies, plus a living allowance for veterans. Approximately 2,000 American Indians were enrolled in some form of postsecondary education during the late 1950s (Brown, 2003). The GI Bill made college affordable to many that would not have attended otherwise. The high dropout rate, nearly 50

percent of the American Indians attending college on the GI Bill, brought a realization of the need for change in the education system for American Indians (Brown, 2003).

Life Circle Tribal College facilities, in 1984, were the former K-12 facilities that were operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. A new facility was built for K-12 when the three elementary and secondary schools in the community were consolidated into one school. Life Circle Tribal College has links with the elementary and public school system in the community in that it provides tutoring, community education programs, faculty and student leadership projects, and weekend academies in math, English, and science (Life Circle Tribal College, 2005).

The curriculum at Life Circle Tribal College focuses on the teaching and learning of the Dakota culture and language as well as preparing students for employment and/or transfer to mainstream institutions. The academic and vocational degrees and certificates available from Life Circle Tribal College include:

- Certificates in Carpentry;
- Associate of Applied Science degrees in Office Technology, Computer Applications, Tribal Administration, and Automotive Technology;
- Associate of Science degrees in Agriculture, Pre-Nursing, and Natural Resource Management;
- Associate of Arts degrees in Accounting, Business Administration, Early Childhood Education, Indian

Studies, and Liberal Arts (Life Circle Tribal College, 2006-2008, p.360).

Life Circle Tribal College states its commitment to quality,

- We strive toward being the best tribal community college;
- We strive to provide appropriate courses and academic programs;
- We employ fully qualified faculty and staff in all positions;
- We structure the institution to optimize the skills and contributions of the staff, faculty, students, and Board of Regents (Life Circle Tribal College, p. 5).

As a confirmation to quality, the first accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools was granted to Life Circle Tribal College in 1990. This first accreditation filled a need for the people of the Life Circle Tribal College reservation to feel as if they had a real college.

Finally, a vital sense of pride is instilled in the students and community that we have, and rightfully deserve, a 'real college'; not an industrial training school or manual arts program, but an institution of higher learning preparing students to be the leaders of the future (Life Circle Tribal College 2005, p.3).

Life Circle Tribal College continues to be accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, and is a member of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (Life Circle Tribal College, 2005).

The vision behind the founding of Life Circle Tribal College was to "provide post-secondary, one- and two-year degrees, in a Dakota cultural setting that was familiar and that maintained the supportive network of family" (Life Circle Tribal College, 2005, p. 7). A change from the early days of the college is the shift in emphasis from almost entirely vocational to a more academically-oriented program. There are still certificates offered for those seeking skills for entry-level positions, but now the college offers a range of programs in professional fields and liberal arts. As a result, more tribal members are working as accountants, programmers, administrators, and teachers in reservation industries and schools as well as skilled laborers, clerks, and secretaries (Life Circle Tribal College, 2005).

Life Circle Tribal College serves primarily American Indian students and focuses on vocational and academic postsecondary education opportunities for those students with an emphasis on preserving and teaching the Dakota culture and language. Sixty-nine percent of the students in 2005 were likely to be female, 28 years of age, and low income. Sixty-one percent were likely to also have dependent children. Sixty-two percent of the faculty staff

in 2005 were tribal members with 14 percent other than Dakota Sioux Indian and 24 percent non-Indian. Of the 58 faculty/staff at the time of the study, 63 percent were graduates of Life Circle Tribal College. Sixteen full and part-time faculty members served in 2005 (Life Circle Tribal College, 2005, p.9).

AIHEC (2006) statistics show that even though the high school graduation rate, 72.1 percent, of American Indians in the community where Life Circle Tribal College is located is increasing, it is below the overall state average, 91.5 percent. Life Circle Tribal College maintains its current enrollment at approximately 200 students and in later years students are taking more credit hours each semester and more students are working toward degrees than in the past (Life Circle Tribal College, personal communication, 2006).

The fulfillment of the mission to provide quality postsecondary education is partially supported with accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. It is further supported by the evidence from an alumni survey done in 2004 of 77 Life Circle Tribal College graduates. On the average, the participants had spent 5.2 semesters to

complete their program of study. Only one person reported being unemployed and 88 percent were employed full-time either on or off the reservation; 73 percent of the graduates held jobs in education, health care, and public administration/government. Eighty-four percent of the same respondents rated the quality of their education at Life Circle Tribal College as excellent or good. The attitude toward Life Circle Tribal College was rated positive and very positive by 98 percent of the respondents and over 95 percent said they would recommend Life Circle Tribal College to a friend or relative and would attend there if they were to begin college again (Life Circle Tribal College 2005).

In a similar survey of tribal college alumni throughout the United States, AIHEC (1999) found that 39 percent of tribal college graduates were attending college with 22 percent working while attending college, 52 percent working only, and nine percent neither working nor attending college. Many of those working were employed in high-need areas on the reservations, such as teaching or health care. This same AIHEC (1999) survey found that 92 percent of tribal college graduates felt that their tribal colleges had prepared them adequately or better for

advanced study with thirty-one percent stating that it was excellent preparation (AIHEC, 1999).

Community is important to the Life Circle Tribal College mission. The college works with the community in more ways than providing educated citizens to return to the reservation to work. Included in the Community Service Department at Life Circle Tribal College are programs for the day care, library, health and nutrition, and language preservation. Some of the Dakota language and culture courses offered consistently at Life Circle Tribal College include: Dakota language I and II, Dakota culture, beading, quilting, American Indian dance, Indian art, and drawing. Others listed in the 2007 catalog are: tribal administration, federal Indian law, Indian studies, Indian history, Dakota thought and philosophy, oral tribal history, and conversational Dakota I and II. Three credit hours of Dakota culture or language are required in partial fulfillment of the certificates and degrees granted at Life Circle Tribal College. (See Appendix G for a complete listing of course offerings.)

Purpose of the Study

This study attempted to answer the questions of how the students and staff at Life Circle Tribal College

perceived Life Circle Tribal College as fulfilling the cultural portion of its mission and what impact they felt the culture-based education approach used there had on students' lives in:

- their educational pursuits at the tribal college;
- their current and future relationships in the community in which they live, including the preservation of Dakota Language;
- their future education and relationships in mainstream colleges and communities outside the reservation?

In the larger context of the tribal college movement, viewing the workings of Life Circle Tribal College may help describe which components such as course offerings, student support services, and extracurricular activities, of the curriculum should be retained and enhanced to promote continued success for students. The workings of Life Circle Tribal College were viewed through the reflections of students and staff on their experiences in their present setting. The outcomes desired at Life Circle Tribal College are that the American Indian students have a chance to achieve success in higher education at the tribal college, be accepted as transfers to mainstream colleges, be

successful in their future lives and careers, and be productive in the communities in which they will live (Life Circle Tribal College, 2007).

Assumptions

This study relies partially on the assumption that the culture-based approach to education claimed to be used at American Indian tribal colleges, appears to provide affordable and accessible postsecondary education to students in tribal communities and appears to prepare these students for employment or additional education on the reservation or in the multicultural world. In addition, this culture-based approach to education provides partial solutions for preserving tribal culture and language in the community and hope for improvement in the future of the community.

It was also assumed that teachers and staff at Life Circle Tribal College were expected to present a culture-based higher education experience to students in a context of understanding of Dakota history, values, and language. Educators were also expected to be aware of the unique learning styles of the Dakota Sioux Indians which were assumed to be family oriented and attune to relationships, oral story telling, and traditions. Indian students were

thought to learn best when taught with visual aids and diagrams rather than with a lecture. They approach tasks visually and seem to prefer to learn by careful observation which precedes performance (Swisher & Deyhle, 1989). In addition, it was assumed that Life Circle Tribal College attempts to instill a sense of community loyalty and self identity in students and staff along with the educational experience in order prepare students to be productive members of the community and to obtain self sufficiency in employment or transfer to mainstream institutions.

Need for the Study

It is anticipated that this study can be used in beneficial ways by Life Circle Tribal College. This document may bring ideas for future development of mission statements and course offerings in order to continue to ensure that postsecondary education at Life Circle Tribal College will be relevant to the Dakota and other American Indian students and increase their chances for success in education and throughout life.

Societies need educated citizens to survive and prosper. Successful education of American Indian students is essential for reservation communities, the states, and the nation. Former Secretary of Education, Terrel H. Bell

and former Alaska Commissioner of Education, William G.

Demmert, Jr., wrote,

The Task Force believes that a well-educated American Indian and Alaska Native citizenry and a renewal of the language and cultural base of the American Native community will strengthen self-determination and economic well-being and will allow the Native community to contribute to building a stronger nation--an America that can compete with other nations and contribute to the world's economies and cultures (Indian Nations at Risk Task Force, 1991, p. iv).

Reyhner (1992) states, "American Indian and Alaska Native students have a high school dropout rate twice the national average; the highest dropout rate of any United States ethnic or racial group" (p.1). Pagano (2002) states that even when higher education is believed to be important; it is not easily achieved for American Indians. Reyhner (1992) further states that 93 percent of American Indian Children in the third grade are optimistic and want to continue to college. Yet, he found that issues of poverty, health, safety, and racial challenges decrease the motivation and the will of American Indian students to reach forward to higher education.

Benefits to the community of educated citizens are also explicated by Echohawk (1994), when he suggests that education is not only important to the individual, but to Indian tribes across the country,

I tell Indian youth that becoming an educated person is the most important thing that they can ever do for themselves, their families, and their tribes (p. 30).

Echohawk (1994) explains that Indian tribes are legally sovereign governments with the power to govern their own affairs. Elected tribal leaders are called upon to make all of the social, economic, and political decisions for their tribal governments just as state and federal elected officials do for their governments. "To properly carry out these responsibilities and programs, tribal governments need trained and educated Indian people who can perform the jobs and do them in ways that respect and integrate traditional tradition and culture" (p. 36).

Background of the Researcher

My involvement with the community in which Life Circle Tribal College exists began long before this study. I am a female of predominantly Norwegian heritage and grew up in an almost entirely Scandinavian, rural community. At college, I met and married a man of similar ethnic background; we moved to a farm on this Dakota Sioux Indian reservation. My fascination with the unique people on this reservation began the day I moved there. In recent years, I had the opportunity to teach part-time at Life Circle

Tribal College; however, I no longer teach there or live on the reservation.

As a part-time instructor at Life Circle Tribal College over several years, I was able to observe that students would often begin taking classes and then quit for a year or two and later return to finish and graduate. It was also evident that a more visual and hands-on approach to instruction was used by many instructors there. For example, the science instructor had traditional plants hanging from the ceiling to dry and a green house was attached to the back door of the lab. About 30 computers in the lab that I was assigned to teach in were built from kits by the students in a hardware class and the carpentry class students constructed a moccasin game platform on the pow-wow grounds.

The value that was placed on providing the opportunity for students, staff, and community members to become familiar with state-of-the-art technology was also evident. Providing students and community members with this opportunity required the latest versions of software and operating systems to be continually installed on the computers. Computer access was almost unlimited and technology workshops were also held for elders in the

community. Students in later years had complete access to wireless Internet service in all classrooms and throughout the college. Instructor stations were also equipped with LCD display units and computers to encourage the use of visuals in instructional delivery.

One-on-one instruction was often seen during or outside of class time. A student and an instructor were likely to be found side-by-side in the computer lab doing research or repairing a computer brought from home. Many of the cultural courses such as beading and quilting often demanded individual help from the instructor. Staff members were also available for student support in many areas that included planning for the future and obtaining child care, transportation, tutoring, and financial aid in order to realize the student's educational goals.

As an instructor at a nearby state community college, I still have the opportunity to work with many students from Life Circle Tribal College as they transfer to take classes prior to or while pursuing the bachelor's degree program brought in to the state campus by a four-year institution. The number of American Indian students in this baccalaureate program from Life Circle Tribal College has increased from two in 2001 to approximately 20 in 2007.

Definition of Terms

American Indian. American Indian refers to the people having origins in and of the original peoples of North and South America that maintain tribal affiliation or community attachment. The Bureau of the Census counts anyone as Indian who declares himself or herself to be an Indian (Office of Management and Budget, 2005). This definition is different from that of an "enrolled member" of a tribe. Enrolled tribal members are able to receive more services and benefits than non-enrolled members. The Department of Interior (2007) states,

The tribal council usually determines whether or not enrollment is granted. Tribal enrollment criteria are set forth in tribal constitutions, articles of incorporation or ordinances. The criterion varies from tribe to tribe, so uniform membership requirements do not exist.

Two common requirements for membership are lineal descendancy from someone named on the tribe's base roll or relationship to a tribal member who descended from someone named on the base roll. A "base roll" is the original list of members as designated in a tribal constitution or other document specifying enrollment criteria. Other conditions such as tribal blood quantum, tribal residency, or continued contact with the tribe are common requirements (p.1).

American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC).

AIHEC is an organization that represents the current 35 tribal colleges, 34 in the U.S. and one in Canada. It is jointly governed by representatives from each institution.

AIHEC has identified the following objectives: maintain standards of quality as validated by accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, assurance of participation in the foundation and administration of educational legislation, assistance for tribal colleges in establishing a secure financial base, and encouragement for greater participation of American Indians in higher education policy (American Indian Higher Education Consortium, 2004).

The American Indian Self-Determination Movement (AIM).

The American Indian Movement was founded in 1968 in Minneapolis by Dennis Banks, George Mitchell, and Clyde Bellcourt to abolish the Bureau of Indian Affairs and to establish Indian self-determination and a revitalization of cultural heritage (Jackson, 1994). Wittstock and Salinas (1998) add that in November, 1972, AIM brought a caravan of Native Nation representatives to the United States Department of Interior, Washington, DC, with 20 claims stating clearly what had to happen if there was to be protection of Native rights and a future free from the dictates of the country that surrounds the Native Nations. AIM has repeatedly brought successful suits against the U.S. federal government for the protection of the rights of

Native Nations guaranteed in treaties. The philosophy of self-determination upon which the movement is built is deeply rooted in traditional spirituality, culture, language, and history. AIM has, at times, been the subject of controversy. It has been at odds several times with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). AIM also briefly took over the Bureau of Indian Affairs building in Washington, D.C. in 1972 (Jackson, 1994).

Culture. Culture is peoples' traditions, history, values, and languages that make up the culture of a group and which contribute to their identity (Alaska Native Knowledge Network (ANKN), 1998). Eagleton (2004) states that the broad sense of culture consists of language, identity, symbols, traditions, community, kinships, practices, caring, and a specific way of life. "It is the taken-for granted behavior that people have without knowing it. What everyone shares in a postmodern world is the fierce way they cherish their differences" (Eagleton, 2004, p. 2).

Culture-based Approach to Education. "Culture-based education is education which reflects, validates, and promotes the values, world views, and languages of the community's culture" (ANKN, 1998, p.1). Life Circle Tribal

College views Dakota culture and language as necessary to give the students a good foundation and a good identity in order to help them succeed in life. Culture-based education also relies on faculty and staff attempting to understand what students are going through in their lives, in and out of the college.

The Higher Learning Commission. This Commission is part of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The Higher Learning Commission oversees the accreditation of degree-granting colleges and universities in nineteen Midwestern and South-Central states, including Arkansas, Arizona, Colorado, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, New Mexico, South Dakota, Wisconsin, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

Immersion into the Dakota Language. Immersion may involve raising children in Dakota language rather than having it just be a class that they attend. It could mean immersion experiences which allow persons to be immersed in the language and away from English for a period of time, as at a camp or in a language course. At Life Circle Tribal College, the Dakota language courses are taught as immersion experiences. All instruction in the courses is in

Dakota language. The students hear and become comfortable with the sound of the language; they learn through practice and memory.

Life Circle Tribal College. LCTC is a pseudonym used to represent the actual tribal college that was used in this study. In Dakota Sioux, the circle represents the tiyospaye or family circle, the world, the seasons, and cycles of life.

Reservation. A reservation is a tract of land set apart by the Federal Government for the use of American Indian people.

Tribal College. Brown (2003) states the definition of tribal colleges as,

Institutions of higher education that have been formally sanctioned by one or more tribes. Ideally, tribal colleges combine the preservation of tribal history, culture, and traditions with academic preparation, vocational training, and basic adult education (p. 36).

Tribal College Mission Statement. The mission statement is a brief description of a college's fundamental purpose. A mission statement answers the question, "Why do we exist?" The mission statement of Life Circle Tribal College declares,

The mission is to provide higher education opportunities, at the community college, including vocational and technical training. As a tribal college

we emphasize the teaching and learning of Dakota culture and language toward the preservation of the Tribe. The goal is student self-sufficiency and independence through academic achievement (<http://www.collegefund.org/>, 2007).

Life Circle Tribal College says that it is different from mainstream public institutions of higher education in that,

- it is chartered by a tribal government;
- its primary focus is on educating American Indian residents living on or near the reservation;
- its specific goal is to assist in the preservation and teaching of Dakota language and culture (Life Circle Tribal College, 2005, p. 57).

Tribal Governments. The United States recognizes the right of Indian tribes to self-govern and supports tribal sovereignty and self-determination. Tribes often follow their own pattern of government with a constitution and bylaws. The elected council usually consists of an elected tribal chairperson and secretary and one or two members elected from each district. Under their constitution, councils are able to appoint governing boards and advisory committees. They also appoint or hire tribal judges. Most tribal governments do not have separation of powers (tribal member, personal communication, 2007).

White House Executive Order 13021. This order reaffirmed the relationship of the federal government to American Indians for the purposes of helping to

- insure that tribal colleges and universities are more fully recognized as accredited institutions;
- increase federal resources for tribal colleges and universities;
- promote access to high-quality educational opportunities to disadvantaged students--high quality college education, job training, and career building programs to young people, adults and senior citizens;
- promote the preservation and revitalization of American Indian languages and culture traditions;
- explore new approaches to better link tribal colleges with preschool, elementary, and secondary schools.

Organization of Study

The background for this study, history of Life Circle Tribal College, purpose and need for the study, involvement of the researcher, and definitions of relevant terminology are presented in Chapter I. Chapter II presents a review of the literature regarding the history of tribal colleges. It includes the theoretical framework, information on the culture-based approach to education and its impact on American Indian students, and concerns that a culture-based

education may have some negative aspects. Additional research results are included in Chapter II that describe a self-assessment of a reservation tribe on their skill level and desired skill level in use of the Dakota language. A description of research methodology and procedures is presented in Chapter III. The transcribed interview data and survey results are presented in Chapter IV and a summary, discussion, implications, and recommendations are presented in Chapter V. There are ideas for further research regarding American Indians and higher education located in Chapter V as well.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a review of literature related to the cultural emphasis of the Life Circle Tribal College's mission statement. The chapter is divided into six major topics:

- history of tribal colleges;
- theoretical framework;
- culture-based approaches to education for American Indian students;
- impact tribal colleges have on American Indian education;
- areas of concern with the use of a cultural curriculum;
- language preservation, including a report on self assessed Dakota language fluency on a reservation.

History of Tribal Colleges

Thelin (2004) relates there are two kinds of history of all colleges. They include the official chronology and formal documents and the informal history that includes memories of the students. An example of this informal

history is when Thelin (2004) quotes the famous statement (of which there is no formal record) by Daniel Webster to the Supreme Court in 1819 about Dartmouth, "It is, sir, but a small college—yet there are those who love it" (p. xiv). Dartmouth may have been the forerunner of private colleges that are not controlled by the state. Tribal colleges are usually small and not controlled by the state.

Thelin (2004, p. 30) may have had some humorous insight into the need for tribal colleges. He writes of early colonial missionary experiments in educating American Indians. He states the attempts were usually disastrous and most colonial college officials that were involved looked quickly for a way to get out. The Indians that showed up were trapped between two worlds and succumbed to measles, consumption, or alcoholism. The Indian chiefs felt that colonial education rendered their future chiefs as "good for nothing" and one chief suggested that young Englishmen should be sent to the tribe for a truly beneficial education in leadership (Thelin, 2004).

Thelin (2004) states that colleges in the Colonial period, such as Harvard, William and Mary, and Yale were "Alma Maters of a Nation," because their academic operations were heroically fused with larger events of

social and political history and independence. Tribal colleges of today are also Alma Maters of their sovereign nations. It is hoped that educated citizens from reservations will return to make a difference in their own communities.

The tribal college movement and the Indian self-determination movement began as a spin-off of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s (Fann, 2003). Fann (2003) adds that the first tribal college chartered in 1968 by the Navajo nation is now known as Dine College in Tsaile, Arizona. Other tribes quickly began starting their own tribal colleges. Schools were set up in abandoned houses, trailers, old store fronts, condemned buildings, barracks, and warehouses (Fann, 2003).

Brown (2003), a member of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Tribe in North Dakota, states that the three main reasons that tribal colleges were created were to provide access to quality higher education for American Indians while they can stay close to home, prepare American Indian students for mainstream institutions, and provide a strong sense of community through cultural education. Modica, et al. (2003) state that the appearance of tribal colleges changed the

lives and communities of Indian people forever. The tribal colleges were,

Developed by and for Indian communities, providing excellent higher educational opportunities while reinvigorating the cultures from which they come. For the first time, in a long and painful history of Indian education, there is hope (Modica, et al., 2003, p. 90).

With the passage of the Indian Self Determination Act in the 1970s, the United States government began to acknowledge tribal colleges and allowed the tribes to determine what was important in their education. American Indians felt that learning the Indian names of plants or the constellations was just as important as learning the Latin and English names. In support of the instruction of tribal languages, Little Bear (2003) states,

Our Native languages can help and should help us to preserve our spiritual identities in addition to our own individual and cultural identities. No language should ever have to die (p. 75).

Modica, et al. (2003, p. 91) state that tribal colleges have begun to adjust their curriculum to follow the words of Sitting Bull,

If the Great Spirit had desired me to be a white man he would have made me so in the first place. He put in your heart certain wishes and plans; in my heart he put other and different desires. Each man is good in the sight of the Great Spirit (Modica, et al., 2003 quoting Sitting Bull, Hunkpapa Lakota, p. 91).

In the fall of 1973 six tribal colleges united to form the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC). Its purpose was to advance the collective agenda of the tribal colleges and to further funding, research, accreditation, and cooperative education in tribal colleges. At the time of this study, all 35 (34 in 13 states and one in Canada) presently existing tribal colleges and universities belong to AIHEC.

Brown (2003) explicates that many of the tribal colleges began with mutual trust and cooperation between the tribal college and a nearby mainstream higher education institution. Some examples of these relationships included: Arizona State University and Dine College and Standing Rock Community College and the now Bismarck State College. Brown (2003) suggests it was important for mainstream colleges and tribal colleges to cooperate and collaborate for the sake of the students. She expresses that attending a tribal college is a necessary step for many American Indian students to achieve their academic goals.

The White House Executive Order 13021, (1996), recognized a federal commitment to tribal colleges. It reaffirmed the purpose of promoting cultural education in order to preserve and revitalize the American Indian and

Alaska Native languages and cultural traditions. White House Executive Order 13270, (2002), reaffirmed the same purpose and established the White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges and Universities to "ensure that this national policy regarding tribal colleges is carried out with direct accountability at the highest levels of the Federal Government" (p. 1). Both White House Executive Orders recognized that tribal colleges were essential to their communities and that they fulfilled vital roles in maintaining and preserving irreplaceable languages and cultural traditions, offering a high-quality college education, and providing job training and other career-building programs.

Thelin (2004) appeared to understand the need to preserve tradition. He writes of how important it is for even the architecture of a college to capture and convey history. Thelin quotes historian Allan Nevins,

One of the more difficult obligations of new institutions is the creation of an atmosphere, a tradition, a sense of the past which might play as important a part in the education of sensitive students as any other influence. This requires time, sustained attention to cultural values, and the special beauties of landscape and architecture. Sensitive students do appreciate both the unique atmosphere and the setting (p. xx).

Modica et al. (2003, p. 62) quote Richard Williams, Director of the American Indian College Fund, "Tribal colleges have changed the history of Indian education in America. Indian people are now excited about going to class and proud of who they are and where they come from."

Modica et al. (2003) state that the tribal colleges are successful because they have adapted their curriculum to reflect the values, intelligence, and traditions of Indian people in order to promote a safe learning environment and develop a culture of respect. This culture of learning and respect appears to have had an impact on the Indian communities and their surrounding communities. It is logical that a strong sense of self-identity and self-respect is beneficial for the success of all students, especially the American Indian student transferring to mainstream colleges for additional courses and advanced degrees.

Boyer (1997) states that Indians, with the self determination movement, are working to exert more control over their own communities. They are making their presence felt and addressing their own needs. He declares that tribal colleges are the greatest development since World War II, because these institutions of higher learning,

founded by tribes and governed by Indians, are "changing lives and offering real hope for the future" (p.1).

At the time of this study, 34 tribal colleges existed in the United States and one in Canada. Montana has the highest number, seven, tribal colleges. These tribal colleges offer numerous academic and vocational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or diploma. The offerings include 33 different major groups with the major groups aggregated into 10 disciplines. All the tribal colleges offer associate degree programs at a minimum, seven tribal colleges offer bachelor degrees, and two offer master's degrees. The most popular discipline is liberal arts, which accounts for 23 percent of the fall 2005 enrollment (AIHEC, 2005). In fall 2005, there were 16,986 certificate and degree-seeking students enrolled in the 32 reporting tribal colleges. Eighty-eight percent of these students identified themselves as American Indian and 66 percent were female. Of the first-time students entering, 69 percent had a high school diploma, 21 percent had earned a GED, and 10 percent had no high school credentials. During the 2004/2005 school year, there were 2,372 graduates from the 32 tribal colleges studied. Associate degrees were earned by 68 percent of these graduates, 7 percent earned bachelor

degrees, 1 percent earned master's degrees, another 1 percent earned other degrees and 23 percent earned certificates (AIHEC, 2006, p.3).

Modica et al. (2003, p.18) speak of maintaining self identity when they quote David Risling, a retired director and professor of American Indian studies at the University of California, "You can live in two worlds. Get to know both worlds and put all the spokes together". Risling had explained that his father told him that Indians were like a dot in the center of a wheel, just one percent of the population. He said "We may have to live in the dominant society, but we are still Indian people. The most important thing is to be who you are" (Risling, in Modica et al., 2003, p.18).

Tribal college faculty and administrators also walk in two worlds. They not only enter a postsecondary education setting but also have access to the traditional knowledge stored in living libraries--the tribal elders on the reservation. Tribal colleges are building teacher education programs that bridge these two worlds by meeting state and regional accreditation standards while also meeting the needs of the reservation students (Ambler, 1997).

AIHEC (2006), in a recent research effort entitled *American Indian Measures for Success (AIMS) in Higher Education*, addresses the awareness that a more appropriate way to measure student success is necessary at community, and especially tribal, colleges than is used at mainstream institutions. The AIHEC (2006) study claims that the instruments used for measuring success of students at large universities such as retention rate, on-time graduation, degree seeking, and percent of full time students, are not appropriate measures of success for tribal colleges. Ambler (2004) states that a need for a different way to measure tribal college students is due to the fact that tribal college students often start at a tribal college and later "stop out" for various reasons related to finances or family and later on return to college. The current student measurement system often counts this type of student as a drop-out and prevents him or her from being counted as a first-time degree-seeking student when reentering college (Ambler, 2004).

Ambler (2005) states, "Tribal College administrators care not only about what happens to the student but also about how the community is transformed by their graduates." She explains that earning excellent grades or obtaining a

good job is not necessarily the measure of success for an American Indian student. Ambler (2005) adds that obtaining a good job is often an ambitious task on a reservation where the unemployment rate can be above 70 percent. She believes the achievement of personal goals would be a more accurate measure of student success. Ambler (2005) quotes a student as saying, "Some things you cannot learn from books."

The way American Indians view education in the home is another reason a more accurate measurement system and a more flexible approach to instruction are necessary. Bowker (1992) suggests that the value system of the American Indian does not regard the school experience as a major path to success. The mainstream school system in America has been fashioned toward competitive achievement of middle class Americans for material wealth. For the American Indian youth, the rewards of education are often not associated with academic competition and wealth (Bowker, 1992). The fact that students are attending college and declaring majors are some measures of success for American Indian students along with graduating, transferring, and obtaining employment and advanced degrees from four-year, mainstream institutions.

The American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) (2006) also reports that tribal college students are unique and differ from students at mainstream colleges and universities. The American Indian students tend to seek schooling in order to serve in their families or communities and nearly one-third of them entering for the first time do not have high-school diplomas. Life Circle Tribal College hosts a GED high school diploma program that began in 1997 and 344 students had received their GED from Life Circle Tribal College by 2004 (Life Circle Tribal College, 2005).

One-fourth of the students entering tribal colleges are unmarried with children and the average family income at the time of this study was \$14,000, which was well below the poverty line (AIHEC, 2006). The social and economic hardships faced by most Indian students compounded by rural isolation often result in students dropping out of college because of family and financial issues. The lack of reliable transportation and day care services also affect retention and graduation rates (AIHEC, 2006).

Theoretical Framework

The "safety zone theory", as explicated by Lomawaima and McCarty (2006), serves as a partial basis for the

present research. The "Safety zone theory" addresses the narrow band of tolerable cultural differences deemed acceptable by the mainstream American (i.e. United States) culture, usually through the federal government. The federal government has variously attempted to assimilate, civilize, or Americanize Native American people, but Boyer (1997) suggests the federal government is the only consistent source of financial support for tribal colleges.

The "safety zone" refers to the degree of cultural difference allowed the indigenous population by the federal government. With the passage of the Indian Self Determination Act in the 1970s, the United States government, as a part of the safety zone process, began to acknowledge tribal colleges and allowed the tribes to determine what was important in their education. Native American peoples have endured federal and mission schools wherein the attempt was made to impose an American style education and eradicate tribal languages and religions. The Native American communities saw the tribal college initiative as a window of opportunity to pursue self-determination at the college level (Lomawaima and McCarty, 2006).

There are at least two influences that mitigate the domination effects of the United States government over the various indigenous nations. First there is the human to human interactions of persons involved in enforcing the "safety zone." These enforcers sometimes fail to interfere with Natives expressing their culture. One example of this non-interference is documented in Lomawaima and McCarty (2006); girls who were at various boarding schools, including the Crow Agency in Montana and the Cantonment Indian Boarding School in Oklahoma, built miniature villages with tepees on the school lawns. Adult braves would view the villages from a distance (Lomawaima and McCarty, 2006). While we have no "data" to address what went through the braves' minds, perhaps an inference could be made that a few might have thought, "Our culture will survive."

The second influence that mitigates the dominating effects of the U.S. government over American Indians is the reactions of native people to the "safety zone." American Indian people have, over time, appealed to levels of bureaucracy in Washington for assistance in cultural preservation (Lomawaima and McCarty, 2006). The American Indians' Program Act of 1974 and the American Indian

Languages Preservation Act of 2006 are results of appeals that indicate how the cultures may be saved. The understanding is that the cultures are dynamic; the saved culture may likely have gone through changes. For example Lomawaima and McCarty (2006) tell of a federal government attempt to support language preservation by translating "The United States is my country" into Navaho. The translation turned out to be, "The Navaho land is my country."

Additional support of language preservation by the federal government is evidenced in the final report of the U.S. Secretary of Education's *Indian Nations at Risk* Task Force (1991). It set as one of its ten national goals the maintenance of native languages and cultures. The Task Force gathered testimony at seven regional public hearings and at the annual conference of the National Indian Education Association, made 30 school site visits, and commissioned 21 papers from national experts on American Indian/Alaska Native education on subjects such as current conditions, funding, dropout prevention, curriculum, and other relevant areas of concern. The Task Force found that "schools that respect and support students' languages and cultures are significantly more successful in educating

those students" (p. 16). Overall, their final report gives strong support for linguistically and culturally appropriate education for American Indian and Alaska Native students and echoes the American Indian Languages Act in calling for the maintenance and renewal of native languages and cultures (Indian Nations at Risk Task Force, 1991). At the local levels many things are being done in tribal communities to preserve cultures and languages that are found in the missions and purposes of tribal colleges. Language immersion experiences are provided in college courses, elementary and secondary schools, language camps, and in community cultural gatherings.

Many American Indian writers have written materials addressing their cultures. One such person was the prolific Charles Eastman, M.D. (1858-1939), a Dakota Sioux whose writing was addressed to Whites and American Indians to impress upon them the dignity of the American Indian peoples, and to relate aspects of Native life to both readerships. Among his many writings were his autobiography about his boyhood (Eastman, 1902) and the use of storytelling (Eastman and Eastman, 1909). Charles Eastman was born Ohiyesa, into the Sioux tribe and lived in the ancient, nomadic way that his ancestors had lived for

centuries--free of reservations and the dominant society that was encroaching everywhere. By the end of his life, he had become a certified medical doctor and had published many successful books read all around the world. The lives of the American Indian, as written by Charles Eastman, came to life as they wrestled with the intrusion of the "White Man" and their own survival (Eastman, 1916). You can hear his stories on Thought Audio.com:

<http://www.thoughtaudio.com/titlelist/0019-indianstories/index.html>

Culture-based Education

Burnett (1994) suggests that what we now call multicultural education originated in the 1960s with the Civil Rights Movement. This coincides well with the American Indian Self Determination Movement and the creation of the first tribal colleges. ANKN (1998) states that culture-based education is far more than the incorporation of cultural events and traditional skills into the curriculum. The goal of culture-based education is to support individuals and build a sense of pride and self esteem in all who wish to affirm their culture. Culture-based education recognizes and validates the students' cultures and helps them to be aware of their heritage and to value the accomplishments of their

families, their communities, and their ancestors (ANKN, 1998).

Eagleton (2004) states that the broad sense of culture consists of language, identity, symbols, traditions, community, kinships, practices, caring, and a specific way of life. "It is the taken-for granted behavior that people know without knowing it. What everyone shares in a postmodern world is the fierce way they cherish their differences" (Eagleton, 2004, p. 2). Eagleton (2004) also states that the return to culture is a revolt against globalization and a desire to keep difference alive, but he cautions that to some people culture is cherished and to others it is claustrophobic (Eagleton, 2004). The increased interest in culture and the celebration of differences is evidenced by the use of culture-based education for American Indians.

There are variations in culture-based education (Gurneau, 2002) that extend from indigenous cultures and languages being at the core of the intellectual vision with the rest of the curriculum revolving around them, to the other end of the spectrum, which is the belief that the purpose of education is to prepare indigenous students to be successful in the white world. Demmert & Towner (2005)

state that there are three established educational theories regarding academic performance of Native peoples that are closely aligned with what we call "Culturally Based Education." They include,

- Cognitive Theory. For learning to occur, relevant prior knowledge in a person's long term memory must be stimulated with the new information to provide meaning and relevance; (Relevant prior knowledge)
- Cultural Compatibility Theory. The more closely aligned the human interactions are in the school and the classroom with those of the community, the more likely the goals of the school will be reached; (Classroom and community closely aligned)
- Cultural-Historical-Activity Theory (CHAT). Issues of culture, language, cognition, community and socialization are central to learning and accomplished through joint, meaningful activity through language exchanges or other semiotic processes. (Culture, language, and socialization activities)

Relevant prior knowledge. The directive for schools to accommodate various learning styles through the use of various teaching styles may require a greater understanding

of common learning styles that might develop within a group of people. Pewewardy (2002) asserts that individuals within a culture tend to have similar learning styles (p. 1).

Reyhner (1994) states that many American Indians tend to be global learners who think reflectively and respond to visual and tactile stimuli. They learn more effectively through cooperation rather than competition. Swisher and Deyhle (1989) state that American Indians usually exhibit a common learning style because of how they have been taught at home. They found that American Indian students often differed from white students in that they viewed making mistakes in public as unacceptable, so they waited to do an assignment until they felt they knew how to do it well. Swisher and Deyhle (1989) also state that American Indians learn to do things at home by observing and watching rather than being told; therefore they benefit from a more visual, hands-on teaching situation in school rather than lecture.

Classroom and community closely aligned. ANKN (1998) suggests that a culture-based education expects students to obtain a strong foundation of their cultural identity by obtaining knowledge of their history, traditions, values and language. Teachers are expected to incorporate community culture into their teaching and challenge each

student to find his or her individual strength. The schools are expected to,

- provide tribal language programs;
- involve elders as part of the program;
- reflect the local culture and environment;
- accommodate various learning styles through the use of various teaching styles (p.1).

In order to prepare teachers to meet the challenge of culture-based education, Banks & Banks (1995) recommend that teacher education curriculum prepare instructors to teach culturally diverse children by including at least one course in multicultural education that takes into consideration the needs of all students and includes information about the history and culture of students from a wide number of ethnic, racial, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds.

Culture, language, and socialization activities.

Demmert and Towner (2005) add that the critical elements of culturally-based education include the following:

- recognition and use of American Indian languages;
- pedagogy and teaching strategies that stress traditional cultural characteristics as well as contemporary ways of knowing and learning;
- curriculum based on traditional culture;

- strong Native community participation including elders and parents;
- knowledge and use of the social and political mores of the community.

Banks & Banks (1995) state,

Cultural education's main goal is to create equal educational opportunities for students from diverse racial, ethnic, social-class, and cultural groups so they are able to function effectively in a pluralistic democratic society and interact and communicate with people from diverse groups and create a community that works for the common good (Banks & Banks, 1995, p. 1).

"To free minds and liberate thinking in educational institutions to obtain true identity requires the continual revitalization of languages, ceremonies, and movement toward self-knowledge" (Gurneau, 2002, p. 23). American Indians appear to want to create equal learning opportunities for their people, direct them to work for community good, and enable them to participate successfully in the multicultural world. They also indicate that they desire to pass on their cultural legacy to future generations (Gurneau, 2002).

Tribal Colleges Impact Education

The history of American Indian education has been one of relentless attempts to standardize, assimilate, and recast Native people (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). American

Indian education today is carefully designed by American Indians with their experiences in boarding schools and self reflections on language, culture, and identity. They have the choice and the right to "remain an Indian" on local and Indigenous terms of expressing tribal sovereignty and self-determination (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006, p. 168). Tribal colleges attempt to provide a culture-based education in a quality postsecondary education setting that will enable students to maintain a sense of cultural identity, be productive members of the tribal community, and function successfully in a multicultural setting. Benally (2004) states, "Education programs incorporating Native culture and values are important attributes of today's Native American Education programs and will continue to be the preferred direction of Native American education" (p.26).

The future work of American Indian education must be based on cultural survival in two worlds—the Indian world and that of mainstream society. This education must be based on American Indian sovereignty and self determination (Benally, 2004, p.25).

In an attempt to assess American Indian students' attitudes of tribal colleges, Boyer (1997) surveyed over 1600 tribal college students. Seven questions on the survey pertained to culture. A few of those seven questions included students being asked if the school helped sustain

the American Indian traditions. Over 92 percent of the respondents agreed that tribal colleges did sustain the American Indian traditions. Over 95 percent of the students felt that American Indian values and customs were respected at their Tribal college and over 85 percent of those surveyed said that American Indian values were infused in most of their classes. The students surveyed also indicated they felt comfortable at the college because it reflected the values of American Indians and because the college had taught them about the history and culture of their reservations and tribes.

Many studies of tribal college students and other literature seem to indicate that a majority of students and staff were very supportive of the cultural focus used in their tribal colleges. Monette (1999), in his statement to the U.S. Senate, said that tribal colleges succeed with American Indian students who have experienced failure, frustration, and isolation in the mainstream institutions because tribal colleges recognize the importance of individualized attention. He continued to explain that tribal colleges realize how important it is to view a student within his or her cultural, familial, and community

context. Cunningham and Redd (2000, p.14) quote a graduate of Fort Peck Community College in Montana, as saying,

Attending a tribal college gave me the courage to go back to school. The small classes and personal relationships with the teachers made me want to give school a chance again (p. 14).

Melmer (2006) writes about the Oglala Lakota College in Rapid City, South Dakota. He explains that one advantage of tribal colleges is that a student may attend with her granddaughter because they are family-oriented learning centers. He quotes an Oglala Lakota student, Donna Smallwood,

Here, they incorporate the culture into the curriculum and make us proud. The college takes care of the whole student, spirituality is nurtured as well, and the faculty make sure you leave with more than you came with (p. 12).

Moreover, students often were supported by family members that believed in the power of education (Melmer, 2006).

Brown (2003) surveyed North Dakota tribal students who had transferred to the University of North Dakota. One said, about attending a tribal college,

It's probably the best move I made as far as going back to school is concerned. At the time, I didn't have the confidence to come right to a four-year school. Definitely, without a doubt, (tribal college) gave me that confidence. It was (located) right at home and I had my family there. I knew the teachers. It's a really nice school and the timing was right, I guess. It pointed me in the right direction (p. 42).

Brown (2003) spoke of another student who said he had waited 30 years between getting an associate (two-year) degree and later attending tribal college and (then) the University of North Dakota (UND). This student said he probably would not have made it had he not attended the tribal college first when he decided to return to school (Brown, 2003). A third student said she would advise other American Indian students to go to a tribal college before going to a university and also to transfer right away instead of waiting. The tribal college is often an essential educational link (Brown, 2003).

The American Indian students at the University of North Dakota (UND) that Brown (2003) surveyed had transferred from tribal colleges in the state. The respondents had transferred in with over 45 credits and above 3.0 grade point average, on a scale of 0.0 to 4.0. The purpose of the study was to gain understanding on how American Indian transfer students felt about their readiness to attend a four-year university after attending a tribal college first. The findings suggested that the respondents felt their experiences in their tribal colleges were excellent and prepared them well for The University of North Dakota and they would highly recommend to friends and

family to attend a tribal college that was close to home with family and tribal college support before transferring to a four-year institution.

Another study by Huffman et al. (1986) of 38 American Indian Students and 49 white students attending the University of South Dakota and Black Hills State College suggests that achievement factors in college differed for White and American Indian students. For Whites, higher education achievement was found to be related to high school Grade Point Average (GPA) and parental encouragement. Success in college for American Indian students seemed to be significantly related more to confidence from a strong sense of personal and cultural identity and retention of traditional cultural heritage ($r=.33$) (p.4).

Life Circle Tribal College's mission is consistent with its purpose that includes a learning environment where students can discover how to live in a multicultural society through preparation for employment in the local job market or continuation to four-year institutions. College achievement is evidenced by completion of programs at the tribal college with a minimum GPA of 2.0 and subsequent employment or/and transfers to and graduations from

mainstream colleges and universities (Life Circle Tribal College, 2005). The Self Study of Life Circle Tribal College reported in an alumni survey done in 2004 of 77 Life Circle Tribal College graduates, on average, the participants had spent 5.2 semesters to complete their program of study, but only one person reported being unemployed and 88 percent of them were employed full-time. Of those employed, 73 percent held jobs in education, health care, and public administration/government. Eighty-four percent of the same respondents rated the quality of their education at Life Circle Tribal College as excellent or good. The attitude toward the college was rated positive and very positive by 98 percent of the respondents. Over 95 percent said they would recommend Life Circle Tribal College to a friend or relative and would attend there if they were to begin college again.

In a similar survey of tribal college alumni throughout the United States, AIHEC (1999) found that 39 percent of tribal college graduates were attending college with 22 percent working at the same time, 52 percent were working and not attending college, and only nine percent were neither working nor attending college. Many of those working were employed in high-need areas on the

reservations, such as teaching or health care. Ninety-two percent of the tribal college graduates surveyed felt that the tribal college prepared them adequately or better for advanced study (AIHEC, 1999).

Areas of Concern

Before the emergence of tribal colleges, American Indian higher education had usually meant an attempt for assimilation into a white culture (Imel, 2001). Tribal colleges began to bring higher education to students using a culture-based approach. The purpose was to celebrate diversity not destroy it and enable tribal college students to succeed in their tribal world and outside the reservation. Demmert & Towner (2003) state that many American Indians had a firm belief that cultural context in education was essential to succeed academically and to build meaningful lives as adults. Opposition to this point of view from tribes or Native educators was not in evidence in the literature that Demmert & Towner (2003) reviewed. On the other hand, Swisher (1991) determined that out of 154 survey respondents, a cross tabulation revealed that 57 percent of American Indians surveyed and 68 percent of non-Indians surveyed believed that cultural values affected the

ways in which American Indian students were more comfortable in demonstrating what they had learned.

Among some of the literature that brought out concerns with the culture-based approach was Kerbo's (1981) data on cultural factors and academic success of American Indian college students. His data suggests that the best independent success predictor for American Indians was the degree of identification and social integration with "Whites". Kerbo adds that it is not overall assimilation or acculturation, but a feeling of being more accepted, equal, and fitting in. He states, "This contextual definition of self leads to increased confidence and better college performance" (p. 127). Even though statistics suggested that there was an increase in American Indian students that attended and graduated from tribal colleges, Demmert (2001) states that research produced mixed results regarding the role of Native traditionalism in enhancing or reducing success in mainstream institutions at the postsecondary level.

Another area of concern with the use of culture-based education is that American Indians may be labeled with a particular learning style. Swisher (1991) cautions against overgeneralizing group tendencies rather than realizing

that individuals within a group have different learning styles. He states, "Assuming that a group will have a particular learning style is not a good idea because of the diversity that exists within cultural groups and reveals itself as individual differences" (P. 2). Problems that could result are inappropriate groupings, stereotyping, and inappropriate excuses for failure in teaching and learning (Swisher, 1991).

Language Preservation

The cultural portion of the mission of Life Circle Tribal College also addresses the preservation of the Dakota language. It would seem reasonable that a person could understand a culture better if they also understand the culture's language. Ron His Horse is Thunder, Tribal Chairman of Standing Rock Sioux Tribe stated, "Someone can learn our ceremonies, songs, and our history; but if you want to save the culture you have to save the language" (Yellow Bird, 2007, p. D1). He also realized that saving the language is a challenge. He stated,

Today, part of young people's culture is shaped by television. We have the traditional culture that we try to teach them. We say, "Learn the language, songs and ceremonies," but they don't see any value in it. They want what everybody else has (Ron His Horse is Thunder as quoted in an interview with Yellow Bird, Grand Forks Herald, September 16, 2007, p. D1).

Nettle & Romaine (2000) state that the death of languages results in the death of cultures. A survey of the languages in the North American continent in 1962 revealed only six American Indian languages, out of more than 200, had more than 10,000 speakers. Among the others, 35 of them had between 10 and 100 speakers and over 50 of these languages had fewer than 10 speakers (Nettle and Romaine, 2000). Languages with fewer than 100 speakers are so close to extinction that revival for everyday use seems unlikely (Nettle & Romaine, 2000).

Crystal (2000) states that, commonly, languages die through cultural change or by assimilation to a dominant culture and language. One main reason for the cause of language death is negative attitudes, both in government policy and local communities. He suggests that to avoid the death of a language, it would be necessary to raise awareness and create positive community attitudes towards it. Sometimes people appear to lack the will to save their own language. Crystal continues,

We make culture as well as receive it. Rituals, music, painting, crafts and other forms of behavior all play their part; but language plays the largest part of all cultural activities (p. 39).

Ron His Horse is Thunder told of how the root words in the Indian name for woman meant the sun or moon and the original giver of life. In an interview he stated,

The language becomes paramount in holding on to a culture. Since we had an oral tradition, not a written one, our culture was embedded in our language. We didn't have books that recorded it. When you learn a language, you just can't learn the word for something you have to learn what it describes and if you learn that, you learn the culture (Ron His Horse is Thunder as quoted in an interview with Yellow Bird, Grand Forks Herald, September 16, 2007, p. D1).

Robins & Uhlenbeck (1991) state it was only recently realized that language management and planning is essential for some languages to survive. This management includes raising speakers' self esteem and regard for language as self identification. Zepeda and Hill (1991) state that, "Each language still spoken is fundamental to the personal, social, and spiritual identity of its speakers. They know that without these languages, they would be less than they are" (p. 135).

DeLarios (2003) writes that the death of a language is often the result of a people who would like to be immersed in their native language, but find it difficult to use two languages often enough to become fluent in both of them. DeLarios (2003) found that very few people on the reservation she studied actually used the tribal language

in their daily lives, including elders. Many of the people knew only a few basic, simple words and the language was often used only at ceremonies. Her study suggested that 87 percent of those surveyed felt they knew how to talk Dakota and could talk with elders of the community in the Dakota language a little bit. She felt that her study was encouraging for Dakota language survival because over 85 percent of those whom she surveyed said yes; they wanted to learn or improve in the use of the Dakota language. One of the strategies she listed to further Dakota language usage in the community involved continuing to offer courses in it at the tribal colleges.

The Dakota language is not as close to extinction as some of the other American Indian languages. Estes (1999) reported that the Dakota language had approximately 20,355 speakers in Nebraska, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Montana. Peacock & Day (1999) studied American Indian tribes that had varying degrees of success in their language maintenance efforts. They found immersion experiences, where people were immersed in the language while away from English hearing and speaking, were very helpful in teaching the language. They say,

When learners are in a setting where only the Native language is spoken, they quickly learn how to say "I

need to go to the bathroom," "I'm hungry," and a variety of other words and phrases (p.3).

It is likely that immersion experiences could range from several days at a language camp, or a course in which only Dakota or another tribal language is spoken.

Summary

The review of literature in this chapter indicates support for the culture-based education provided according to the mission statements at tribal colleges. It was apparent from studies such as Brown (2003), Boyer (1997), and AIHEC (1999) that many American Indians feel that there is a correlation between success of the student and the culture-based approach to education implemented at the tribal colleges. Hilberg & Tharp (2002) conclude that there are some differences in learning styles between cultural groups, but there is growing evidence that instruction for both Native and non-Native students produced gains in student achievement when the instruction included observation, collaborative activities, and information presented with visual aids (Hilberg & Tharp, 2002).

This cultural emphasis appears to have developed, through the years, an approach to education that includes a concern about the student in and out of the college setting. This approach may bring relevancy in higher

education and success to students that might otherwise not attend college or succeed at it. The review of literature also indicated that there are some areas of concern with the use of culture-based education such as labeling or stereotyping (Swisher, 1991). In the area of language preservation, most of the research reviewed was reflective of the view that the demise of language would mean the demise of the culture (Crystal, 2000).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study attempted to answer the questions of how did students and staff at Life Circle Tribal College perceive Life Circle Tribal College as fulfilling the cultural portion of its mission and what impact did students and staff feel the culture-based education approach used there have on students' lives in their educational pursuits at the tribal college, in their current and future relationships in the community in which they live, and in their future education and relationships in mainstream colleges and communities outside the reservation? This chapter presents the research methodology of the study including the attainment of permission, observational activity and participant selection, research questions, and data collection and analysis. It also presents a discussion of the validity, strengths, and limitations of the study.

Attainment of Permission

Consent to do the study was obtained from the Life Circle Tribal College president. She was contacted by the

researcher for permission to do research at the college.

She replied with an e-mail that said,

Your topic of study is very interesting and could be very useful to our college as we continue to improve and enhance academic programming. You have my permission. Please keep me posted as to your progress.

Permission was then obtained from the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board. I asked each participant to sign a consent form (see Appendix F) before we started each interview and before each survey was filled out.

Selection of Activities and Participants

The observational sites and events were selected from among the many activities at the tribal college, both formal and informal, and included employee appreciation luncheons, a tipi raising, a language development conference, a birthday party, a graduation ceremony, student/instructor interactions, and other common daily activities. Familiarity with the sites had been accomplished through prolonged engagement both as a resident on the reservation and as a part-time faculty member at Life Circle Tribal College.

The small size of the college, 190 full and part-time students, made it possible for almost everyone involved with the college to be aware of the study. The sample of persons interviewed and surveyed included students and

staff members who volunteered or were asked to participate. A conscious effort was made by the researcher to interview members from various age groups and also members from both the student body and instructive, administrative, and support staff. Often, a study participant would suggest the name of another person that would be interested in participating. Some interviewees approached the researcher and suggested they would be interested in helping and others were just asked when they were met in the hall moving between classes.

One final interview was conducted in September, 2007. The interview centered on the present status of Dakota language within Life Circle Tribal College and the surrounding tribal community. The person interviewed was one of the two elder instructors of Dakota culture and language at Life Circle Tribal College.

A total of 15 people--six staff, one community resident, and eight students out of 190 full and part-time students--were interviewed from November 2005 to January 2006. The students interviewed were all female American Indians except for one American Indian male. They ranged in age from the early twenties to the late fifties. The staff who were interviewed included the female president, the

male registrar, and the female payroll manager that were all American Indian. Three instructors were also interviewed--one American Indian male, one non-American Indian female, and one non-American Indian male. The community resident participated during the interview of her niece. The fact that the majority of students and staff interviewed were female accurately represents the composition of the students and staff at this tribal college. The typical student in 2005, 69 percent, was likely to be female and the typical staff person, 66 percent, was likely to be female (Life Circle Tribal College, 2005).

After the interviewing had taken place and a preliminary analysis had been undertaken, it was decided that further data collection was necessary to clarify certain issues for the researcher. Newman and Benz (1998) state that often qualitative and quantitative research cannot be separated. They suggest that research often involves a continuum with qualitative methods used as a foundation for the research which is frequently followed by quantitative methods. The need for further data resulted in two surveys which were constructed to specifically address those issues that needed clarification. The first survey

seemed necessary after the interviews in order to clarify how students and staff perceived Life Circle Tribal College as fulfilling its cultural mission and the impact they felt it had on student's lives. The second survey seemed necessary after the cultural gathering for language preservation in order to determine how students and staff at Life Circle Tribal College assess their Dakota language skill levels and what Dakota language skill levels they would desire for themselves and their descendants. Almost all survey respondents were American Indian students except for one American Indian instructor and one non-American Indian staff person. The survey respondents were not previously interviewed. The first survey and consent forms (See Appendix F) were given to students and staff passing in the hallways shortly after the interviews concluded early in 2006. The second survey with consent forms (See Appendix F) were given one evening to students and staff taking night classes or walking in the hallways in April of 2006 after a cultural gathering that was held to promote the preservation of the Dakota language. Both surveys were completed and returned a few minutes after the participants received them.

Research Questions

This study used both interview and survey questions to combine qualitative and quantitative research aspects in order to obtain a more complete understanding of the situation and to allow for triangulation. The interview questions were developed by keeping in mind Dr. Nadie's explanation that the culture-based approach to education is much more than beads and feathers. Interview questions attempted to obtain information on how students and staff at Life Circle Tribal College perceived that their college fulfilled the cultural portion of its mission and what impact they felt the culture-based education approach used there had on students' lives in their

- educational pursuits at the tribal college;
- current and future relationships in the community in which they live, including the preservation of Dakota Language;
- future education and relationships in mainstream colleges and communities outside the reservation.

As semi-structured interviews are free-flowing, the persons interviewed could inject their own ideas and that might redirect the interview conversation. Much of redirected and additional conversation centered on the need to preserve

the Dakota language in order to preserve the culture. Other free-flowing ideas came from comments on what cultural courses students would like to see added to the curriculum.

The first quantitative survey (See Appendix D) addressed how students and staff perceived the college as fulfilling its cultural mission and the impact they felt it had on students' lives. These individuals were also asked for their thoughts on whether they thought a cultural component should be added to the curriculum or whether the curriculum should be built around Dakota culture.

The second quantitative survey (see Appendix E) addressed how students and staff assess their Dakota language skill levels and what Dakota Language skill levels they would desire for themselves and their children. An open-ended question was used to ask them what cultural courses they would like to see offered at this tribal college.

Data Collection and Analysis

Qualitative observations. Observations began after obtaining permission to do the study in November of 2005. Erickson (1985) suggests that interpretive research methods using participant observational fieldwork are appropriate when one desires to know more about what social actions

take place in a particular setting, what those actions mean to the actors at the moment, how the happenings are organized into patterns for everyday life, and how the ways of life in this setting compare to settings in other places and other times. Observations of the grounds were conducted first to obtain a sense of the physical environment.

Participant observations also began at that time and extended through summer of 2006. Seven of the eight observations (See Appendix B) took place on the campus of Life Circle Tribal College. One observation was held at a dining establishment in the nearby non-reservation community. This observation took place at the dining establishment because I was invited to attend.

Participant observational data was gathered, recorded, and analyzed as a way to experience some of the cultural activities that could be considered to be as much a part of the Life Circle tribal college as was the curriculum. Observational data enabled the researcher to explore the ways the cultural activities of the college impacted the following sources:

- the college personnel--such as classroom activity, employee luncheons, and student staff relationships;

- the community--graduations, tipi raisings, and Dakota language cultural gatherings;
- the outside world--graduations and the North Central Accreditation process.

Observations were partially the basis for the development of interview and survey questions to determine how the participants in the cultural activities that were observed perceived the value of the various cultural activities.

Qualitative Interviews. Fifteen interviews were conducted. Twelve interviews were conducted on campus in an empty classroom and each interview took about thirty minutes. Three of the interviews were conducted in community businesses in quiet rooms designated for the meeting. The interviews were recorded on tape at the time of the interview and later transcribed by a paid transcriber. Seidman (1998) stated that interviewing is a primary way a researcher can investigate an educational organization through the experience of the individual people who make up the organization or carry out the process.

So much research is done on schooling in the United States; yet so little of it is based on studies involving the perspective of the students, teachers, administrators, ... whose individual and collective experience constitutes schooling (Seidman, 1998, p.4).

Seidman (1998) adds that interviewing as a method of inquiry is consistent with people's ability to make meaning through language and it is deeply satisfying to researchers that are interested in others' stories.

A coding system of margin notes was used to categorize the notes from the observations and the responses from the interviews. (See Figure 1). Common codes emerged from the transcribed data. The following are three main categories and their codes:

Relationships within the college

- closeness to home, family, and friends;
- flexible approach to education is used--faculty and staff that understand the situations;
- sense of pride and identity increased;
- respect for others and relationships-- employees, colleagues, and students treated as valuable.

Relationships with the reservation community

- the community needs American Indians who obtain advanced degrees to come home to improve the situation in the community;

- sharing food and time together—cultural and ceremonial activities within the college that included the community;
- preservation of Dakota language for the community.

Relationships with those outside the reservation;

- chance of success in future mainstream colleges;
- understanding when dealing with the multicultural world

Relationships within the college, with the community, and in the outside world emerged as categories. The category of relationships within the college included some of the following: courses were taught in a manner that was relevant to the culture of the student, transportation problems were minimized as the college was located in the community for easy access, and friends and family would be attending college at the same time. As the staff and faculty were familiar with the lifestyles, history, and culture of the Dakota Sioux, the addition of cultural components to courses helped students to understand their heritage and develop a greater sense of identity.

The category of relationships between college and community was based on the idea that the college was the key to improving living conditions in the community, preserving the culture and language, and improving relationships with elders. The apparent relationships to the community included students returning to the community in order to improve it after advanced education, appreciating the cultural rituals because they were comforting and a time to get together, and responding to the threats of extinction of the Dakota language.

Relationships with those outside the reservation gave rise to the question, Does knowledge of one's heritage increase the chances of success in mainstream colleges, workplaces, and interrelationships in a multicultural world? (See Figure 1 for a schematic representation of the codes, categories, themes, and assertion.)

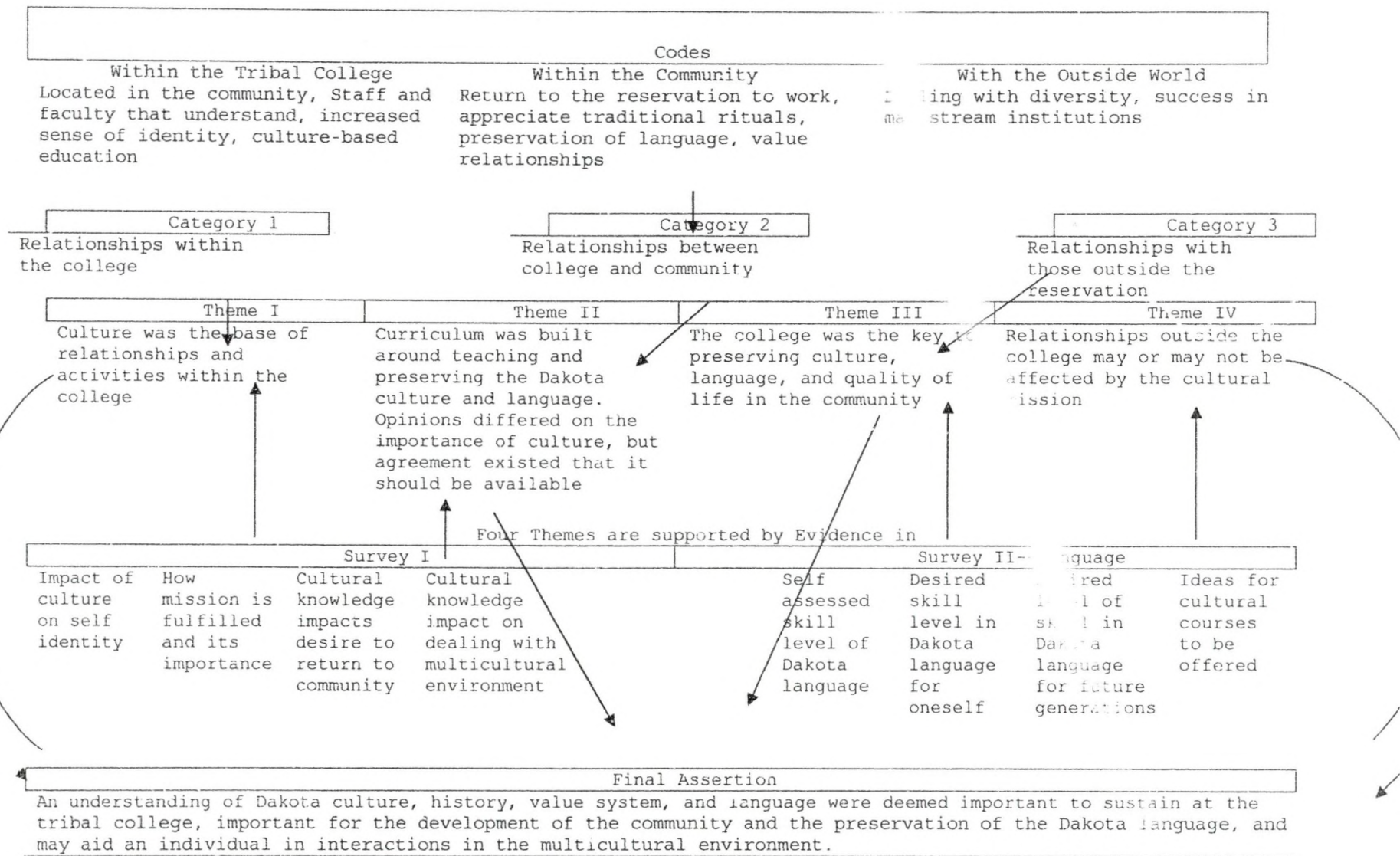


Figure 1 Codes, Categories, Themes, and Assertion

Quantitative results. The questions for the surveys grew out of the data analysis of observations and interviews. All questions on each survey were objectively stated except for one open-ended question on each survey (See Appendices D & E). The responses were tabulated. The results of one-choice responses were stated as percentages of the total. The ranking responses were also tabulated. The first choices were weighted with three points, second choices weighted with two points, and third choices weighted with one point. The resulting percentages represented the proportion of weighted responses given among the set of responses. The comments on the open-ended questions were recorded and analyzed qualitatively.

The following themes emerged from the categories:

- Theme I--Culture was the base of relationships and activities within Life Circle Tribal College (observations);
- Theme II--Culture was important in the curriculum of Life Circle Tribal College. Curriculum was built around teaching and preserving the Dakota culture and language. (interviews and surveys);
- Theme III--The college was a key to preserving the culture and language and improving living conditions

in the community. Students returned to the community to work and make a difference and the college attempted to preserve the Dakota language. (interviews and surveys);

- Theme IV—Relationships outside the college may or may not have been affected by the cultural mission. A stronger sense of self identity may help in dealing with the multicultural world and success in mainstream colleges may be affected more by the individual than knowledge of one's culture. (interviews and surveys).

Validity

Validity refers to how well a variable measures what it purports to measure. Glesne (2006) suggests that with qualitative research, the scientific values of validity, objectivity, and generalizability do not apply in the same way as they do for quantitative research. The values that apply for qualitative are rapport, reflexivity, and trustworthiness (Glesne, 2006). Seidman (1998) suggests that the notion of "trustworthiness" may be used for that of "validity" (p.17). Seidman (1998) also recognizes, in the qualitative research process of interview, that the research instrument is the human interviewer who is capable

of using skills to respond to situations and minimize distortions.

Rapport and trustworthiness were likely obtained due to the researcher being a former participant on the reservation and a former part-time instructor at Life Circle Tribal College. The researcher was different from an outside observer asking for personal information. Results of a study conducted at the institution where the researcher was a part-time instructor should include a deeper understanding for the tribal college, the students, the staff, and the community. Powdermaker (1966) indicates that well managed relationships can lead to advancement from a "stranger to a friend" with some interviewees.

Powdermaker (1966) also said that even though friendship can entangle the research process by inhibiting objectivity it may also assist the researcher and the participants to develop new understandings. She emphasized the importance of recognizing one's subjectivity and interacting with participants. She said the researcher should show a genuine concern and have a desire to find out how things really are or, at least, how respondents see how things are. Seidman (1998) felt that interviewing a number of participants increases validity because,

We can connect their experiences and check the comments of one participant against those of others. Such links among people whose individual lives are quite different but who are affected by common structural and social forces can help the reader see patterns in those experiences (pp. 17).

Seidman (1998) suggests that there is room in the universe for multiple approaches to validity. The goal of interviewing is to understand how the participants understand and make meaning of their experiences and if the interview is structured to allow the participants and the interviewer to make sense, then it has gone a long way toward validity (p. 17). Seidman (1998) added,

What are needed are not formulaic approaches to enhancing either validity or trustworthiness but understanding of and respect for the issues that underlie those terms. We must grapple with them, doing our best to increase our ways of knowing and of avoiding ignorance, realizing that our efforts are quite small in the larger scale of things (p. 20).

Seidman (1998) also explained that interviews range from tightly structured with preset, standardized, normally closed questions to open-ended, apparently unstructured, anthropological interviews that seem to be like friendly conversations. The interview approach in this study used some preset open-ended questions that explored the student and staff experiences and views at Life Circle Tribal College and how they made meaning of these experiences. The interviews were also open to conversation on other issues.

Newman and Benz (1998) list validity concerns with the use of observation. They state that observation is the most frequently used method in qualitative research and it is more valid than a second-hand account of a happening. Newman and Benz (1998) explain that the two types of observation--participant and non participant--differ. With participant observation, the researcher is obvious to and involved with the persons studied and with non-participant observation, the observer attempts to be hidden and not involved. Newman and Benz (1998) suggest a lack of validity with observational research because of researcher bias. They also suggest an increased lack of validity when the researcher is a participant observer because as the researcher adapts to being a member of the group he/she becomes blinded to the peculiarities.

Pressick and Sainsbury (2002) speak about many of the challenges, such as neutrality, that exist when a teacher doubles as a researcher--in her own "backyard,". They say there are benefits to insider knowledge, but the challenge exists in seeing the familiar site through new eyes. They state that the students also must understand and react with multiple identities toward the researcher. They list some of the common barriers of doing research in a familiar

setting as not finishing the process, sexism and racism, going native, being bored, and reporting the familiar. Erickson (1985) minimizes some of the concerns and suggests that it is only a few steps beyond the classroom for a teacher to become an interpretive researcher. He adds that interpretive fieldwork research requires the skills of observation, comparison, contrast, and reflection that all humans possess.

This researcher recognized the main problems in this "backyard study" as overidentifying, going native, with the participants and considered the possibility that the participants would strive to please the researcher. Information given to the students about the study and the following of proper procedures such as obtaining permission, using consent forms (See Appendix F), and maintaining confidentiality, during the study, enabled both students and researcher to help redefine identities from student/teacher or friend to include interviewee and researcher.

In taking the advice of Pressick and Sainsbury (2002), the researcher attempted, at all times, to be acutely aware of the potential pitfalls, and recognized the need for critical reflection in order to maintain academic

integrity. Lincoln and Guba (1985) give the following suggestions on how qualitative researchers can meet trustworthiness criteria. They say credibility can be strengthened by

- prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation;
- peer debriefing and member checks;
- following up on negative case analysis;
- referential adequacy—digital recordings, transcriptions, and other;
- member checks—formal and informal checking with others for confirmation.

This study was strengthened by prolonged engagement. The researcher had been involved with the tribal college for several years and had numerous opportunities to be an observer. Triangulation was attempted with the use of observations, interviews, and surveys. Greene et al. (1989) suggest there are five major purposes for conducting mixed methods research. They include triangulation and corroboration of data, clarification of data, discovering paradoxes and contradictions, development of findings in one method to inform the other method, and expansion of the breadth of the research. Peer debriefing and member checks

were used often throughout the process. Distance was maintained by the awareness of the closeness of the researcher to the subjects and the environment. The interviewing of a number of people also led to increased validity because several similarities and connections could be made from the data of different interviewees.

Strengths and Limitations

Strengths of this study included the fact that information was taken from three sources--participant-observation, qualitative interviews, and quantitative surveys. Bias that may have been held unconsciously by the researcher in the qualitative aspects of the study could have been made visible in the quantitative analysis.

A limitation of this study may have been that some participants did not share their true feelings or the right question was not asked--nonresponse error. The responses may also have been misinterpreted and therefore misrepresented by the researcher--measurement error. The respondents may also have answered in a way in which they felt they should, rather than how they actually thought. The Humane Research Council (2007) maintains,

Qualitative research is an essential tool for researchers and advocates alike, but it can be subject to certain limitations. Respondents' answers may differ from their actual opinions or behavior for a

variety of reasons, particularly when it comes to making predictions about themselves. Some participants intentionally misrepresent their behavior and opinions about an issue in an effort to please the researcher. Despite these limitations, much can be learned from qualitative data if we apply intelligent methods and analysis (p.1).

Reliability was also a concern because there was no certain guard against the impact of the researcher's subjectivity for the interview questions. The use of survey questions after the interviews increased objectivity as did the awareness of the researcher's possible influence on the subjects. Erickson (1985) states that deliberate and long-term reflection that includes the researcher's deliberate scrutiny of his or her own interpretive point of view is necessary.

The individual responses, opinions, perspectives, and recommendations were documented and analyzed to provide an analysis of the perceptions of students and staff of Life Circle Tribal College on the culture-based education set forth by the Life Circle Tribal College mission statement. The analysis should bring ideas for future development of mission statements and course offerings in order to continue to ensure that higher education at Life Circle Tribal College will be relevant to the Dakota and other American Indian students and increase their chances for

success in education and throughout life.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This study attempted to answer the question of how students and staff at Life Circle Tribal College perceived Life Circle Tribal College as fulfilling the cultural portion of its mission and what impact students and staff felt the culture-based education approach used there had on students' lives in their educational pursuits at Life Circle Tribal College, in their current and future relationships in the community in which they live, and in their future education and relationships in mainstream colleges and communities outside the reservation.

The first portion of this chapter addresses

- Theme I--Culture was the base of relationships and activities within Life Circle Tribal College.

This portion of the chapter is intended to acquaint the reader with the cultural aspect of the college from participant observations. (See field notes from participant observations in Appendix B).

The chapter will next present information obtained from the interviews and two surveys (See interview

transcripts in Appendix C and surveys in Appendices D and E). The interview and survey information will be divided into Themes II, III, and IV

- Theme II--The importance of culture in the environment
 - o educational goals were built around teaching and preserving Dakota culture;
 - o the cultural focus was viewed and appreciated differently by different people;
 - o there seemed to be different opinions on whether or not culture was important but agreement that the teaching of culture should be available for those who were interested.
- Theme III--The college was a key to preserving the culture and language and improving living conditions in the community.
 - o students returned to the community to work and make a difference;
 - o Life Circle Tribal college attempted to help preserve the Dakota language;
- Theme IV--Relationships outside the college may or may not be affected by the cultural mission.

- o a stronger sense of self identity may help in dealing with the multicultural world;
- o success in mainstream colleges may be affected more by the individual than knowledge of one's culture.

The chapter will conclude with a summary of these.

Theme I—Culture Observed in the College

Observations. Culture was the essence of Life Circle Tribal College. Dakota culture was evidenced by the live buffalo in the wooded hills in the background, Indian paintings on the walls, and the words on wall-hangings around the college written in Dakota language accompanied by the English terms.

Dakota culture was felt in an atmosphere of humility, warmth, and friendliness of the people in the classrooms, at employee luncheons, and at community gatherings. "The concepts of sharing, giving, and working together are (were) culturally based" (interview with Dr. Nadie). Dakota culture was also heard in the frequent prayers said in Dakota language at the beginning and ending of ceremonies (See Appendix A) and in the songs by the American Indian drummers and singers used as entertainment or honor songs.

Observed relationships within the college. The sprawling college located in a small reservation town was surrounded by wooded hills. The tipi and log cabin in the front lawn gave one a sense of being in a unique place. Inside the college, the rich natural hues of carpeting complimented the American Indian designs and paintings that adorned the walls. Star quilts, beaded articles, and wood carvings were found throughout the buildings.

Participant observation at classroom settings, graduations, employee dinners, staff and faculty meetings, pow wows (wacipis), tipi raisings, and other ceremonies suggested that relationships were very important in this place. The classroom settings extended from one student to thirty students, the employee dinners often hosted between 30 and 50 guests, and the ceremonies, such as graduations, included over 200 people in a crowded gymnasium.

Dr. Nadie was often observed speaking at gatherings. She said that she returned to her reservation to make a difference.

I am blessed to come home in the capacity as president of this college. It has been challenging. My main focus is to treat people well and recognize the good in people. The Grandfather takes me to the places I am supposed to be. We will not try to only fit culture into the curriculum, but I have come to realize that everything must be rooted in culture. Eating and sharing food is a part of developing relationships and

the connection of why we are together and why we should be good to each other. The ultimate good that we can do as a college is to bring hearts and minds together. It is about our grandchildren coming here in the future and learning about the culture (Dr. Nadie speaking at a cultural gathering).

The people, American Indians and non-American Indians, at this tribal college were observed in their relationships. In the back of one computer lab, students were seen repairing their home computers with the aid of a skilled instructor. This instructor used this opportunity to give hands-on instruction even if there was no formal class. Students were welcome at almost all the gatherings and many of them served as staff or interns in the offices. In the computer skills classroom, many of the calendars and signs made by the students portrayed American Indian art and the use of Dakota terms. American Indian designs were also seen in the beading and art classrooms.

Staff and administration at Life Circle Tribal College were friendly and professional and they appeared to care about the entire student. For example, a staff member said,

We try to give students a way of better handling situations. They are adults so we can only make suggestions, but we try to offer some options that they never thought of so that they can work their way through college with families and jobs. We have to be serious here but we try to do stuff in a positive way, in a good way.

Students at Life Circle Tribal College also appeared respectful of faculty, staff, and the infrastructure. The college was very clean and the coffee pot was inviting at the end of the hall. The caring and sharing of the Dakota people was seen and felt with every smile, kind word, and cup of coffee.

It was apparent that sharing food formed bonds of the people within the college itself, within the community, and with the outside world. The experience of the monthly employee luncheon buffets, held in the gymnasium, usually consisted of mashed potatoes, sliced roast beef, corn, cabbage slaw, macaroni salad, buns, and sweet bars. The old gymnasium had window blocks painted in American Indian designs. The luncheon was often catered by a local restaurant. Employees and several students filled their plates and sat in mixed groups around the many tables. Chatter and laughter filled the air until the hour ended and each person returned to work with a fresh outlook.

These luncheon gatherings happened more than once each month and served 30-50 people. An example was a birthday party held for the president's professional assistant. This luncheon was "potlatch" rather than a catered meal which meant there were American Indian foods like fry bread,

juneberry pudding, and Indian soup to eat. Everyone again sat in groups and visited at the tables. The president of the college prepared barbecue buns for everyone as they walked through the lunch line. Afterwards, an e-mail was quickly sent by the celebrated assistant to all employees with the simple phrase, "I just want to thank everyone for the delicious lunch! Good food and good people make this day special." The monthly employee luncheons and other celebrations appeared to be an attempt to reveal to employees how valuable and appreciated they were. This, in turn, seemed to encourage employees and students to treat each other well.

A Christmas employee appreciation dinner was held at an expensive dining place in a nearby town. The entertainment for the Christmas employee appreciation evening was a stand-up comedy act by a beautiful American Indian woman who was the former Miss South Dakota. She helped everyone to laugh, not only at her jokes, but also to see humor in many situations that are common on the reservation and otherwise might not have been funny. It was likely that everyone left feeling valued and renewed and the warmth of the evening extended in each person's mind

and to discussions at the workplace or where and whenever the participants later met.

Observed relationships with the community. An example of three events that included students, the college, and the community were graduation, tipi raising in the summer, and the annual cultural gathering in March. Graduation displayed an array of traditional culture. Star quilts were given as gifts, drummers and singers performed throughout the ceremony, prayers (See Appendix A for an example of a Dakota Prayer) were spoken by an elder in Dakota language first and repeated in English, and motivational speakers addressed how the challenges of the reservation can be overcome with education. A decorated graduation cake and a meal eaten together culminated the ceremony.

The tipi raising was another example of Life Circle Tribal College celebrating Dakota culture with the community. At the tipi raising on the front lawn in the summer, an elder explained some of the ancient American Indian traditions and also how duties were separated among American Indian men and women long ago. A group of staff, students, and community members, circled around the elder and the tipi as he spoke.

The annual cultural gathering also brought community members to the college. Again, everyone ate together. This gathering mainly included speeches on the importance of preserving the Dakota language. Everyone stood quietly as the Native drummers and singers did honor songs for war veterans and prayed several times in the Dakota language with the prayers repeated in English.

Another event that was connected with the community embodied the essence of the culture-based approach to education used at this college. An e-mail was sent out to all students, employees, and some community members that said, "You are invited to wahanpi and frybread apetu at 12:00 noon." While "frybread" is locally understood and loved (something like a deep fried tortilla), the use of the Dakota words "wahanpi" (or soup) and "apetu" (today) was a way of introducing Dakota words into ordinary speech. The wahanpi (soup) luncheon was very effective. Its purpose was to teach some words in the Dakota language--wahanpi and apetu. It is a safe assumption that almost everyone who participated in the soup luncheon learned that wahanpi apetu in Dakota means "soup today" in English. This is just one example of an educational approach that appears to be used consistently throughout Life Circle Tribal College.

Observed relationships with those outside the reservation. Other people had the opportunity to work with or spend time with the people in Life Circle Tribal College. The Higher Learning Commission accreditation team of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, which came to Life Circle Tribal College, was greeted both with trepidation and warmth. The community and the college gave their sincere best to them while just being themselves. A program, similar to other gatherings at the college, contained a welcome from the Dr. Nadie, Dakota language prayers given by a local elder and repeated in English, performances by local Native drummers and singers, speakers from the community, and introductions of distinguished guests from area universities. The ceremony ended with a traditional luncheon that included Indian fry bread, juneberry pudding, and Indian soup. After spending three days at the college and in the community, ten years of accreditation was the suggestion of the team, which was later awarded. The send-off to the Higher Learning Commission accreditation team of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools consisted of another ceremony and luncheon that involved the college and the community, as well as gifts to the members of the North

Central Accreditation team of jackets and handmade star quilts.

Observational results of this study suggested that the college attempted to instill values of respect and community in its students through the use of a culture-based approach to education. Observations also supported the assumption that faculty and staff attempted to understand what students were going through in their lives, in and out of the college. With this understanding, the faculty and staff provided a culture-based education in an atmosphere of service by example in how staff, faculty, and students respectfully and humbly worked with each other and the community.

Theme II—Culture-Based Education

Interviews. Pluviose (2006) quoted a tribal college president, "The preservation of American Indian culture is at the core of the tribal college mission. Culture should be the foundation and everything else should integrate into us" (p. 4). Life Circle Tribal College mandates the completion of one course, three semester credits, of Dakota culture or language for each of its degree and certificate programs (Life Circle Tribal College, 2006).

An elder of the community who taught Dakota culture at Life Circle Tribal College explained that The Dakota culture courses that she teaches at Life Circle Tribal College require no book but include learning about the many traditions of Dakota ancestors through observing and participating in activities such as drying meat or corn and tanning hides. She added that she also provides the opportunity for her students to participate in more modern Dakota activities such as making star quilts. In addition students learn of ancient customs such as name giving of a child that is born. This instructor explained that the term name-giving caused some controversy so it is now called name-recognition. She said the name for a child traditionally came from something that happened during the pregnancy or the birth. For example, if the mother saw a butterfly while giving birth, the name would be Kimimela. She said that books are not the right way to obtain a child's name (Dakota culture instructor, 2007, personal communication).

Even though one Dakota culture or language course was required as partial fulfillment for graduation from Life Circle Tribal College, cultural instruction followed the theory that,

You don't have to bring in Dakota words, drums, and things like that (into the general education classrooms). You just have to bring in the Dakota values so the Dakota people understand their history and why they are on the reservation and how their situation came to be. Maybe this will make them realize that it wasn't their entire fault, you know, that they are where they are and they just have to improve it from there, giving them a sense of identity (Dr. Nadie, 2006, personal communication).

Nevertheless, instructors attempted to add culturally-relevant components to their courses. An American Indian instructor said,

Part of what we are supposed to be doing as instructors here is to incorporate culture into our classes where it is appropriate and where we can. As far as I know, all our instructors try to do that. Some classes lend themselves more easily to that than others.

This instructor said he had just given a list of anatomy terms to the Dakota language instructor for the Dakota names because he felt these terms would be relevant to the students. He added that the same thing could work in other courses, such as geography with weather terms and types of rocks. A non-American Indian instructor said that he tries to bring culture into classes. For example, he said that instead of asking how a business in Japan would do something differently, he asks how a reservation business would do it differently. He also mentioned that he adds things about his Irish culture.

Another non-American Indian instructor said that she believed all the instructors tried to integrate culture into their courses, but she felt that social sciences and language arts courses lend themselves more easily to this. She often gives students a choice of activities that are unique to their culture such as the choice of reading American Indian short stories in literature. She described a student who gave a presentation on American Indian women in business.

Tribal colleges located on the reservations provide not only affordable and culturally relevant postsecondary education, but they are very accessible to the community. A former student and current staff member felt grateful for the convenient location of this tribal college. He said,

Neither one of my parents graduated from high school. Without the opportunity to attend school here, I might not have finished my associate degree. It was convenient to be in the community and the instructors and the staff worked with us to make sure we were able to get our work done. They knew we were all raising families and working to make a living.

Other students and staff interviewed also felt that the convenience of having the college close to their homes, families, and friends was a definite advantage because of family and work responsibilities and family support. One

could find several generations of family members and friends attending college at the same time.

The interviewees also seemed to feel that it was important for staff and faculty to have an understanding of the student and what his/her life was like outside the college. They indicated that it was important to have faculty and staff who understood the Dakota value system, learning styles, and way of life on the reservation. This flexible approach to teaching that seemed to be required with the greater understanding of students' lives and value system, often included providing choices of cultural activities in the assignments in the classroom. A student spoke of the effectiveness of a non-Indian instructor when he said,

We have one instructor here, which was raised out here and taught out here her whole life. She knows how we are, you know, so, that helps out with her teaching here.

This particular student was planning to be an elementary instructor on a reservation.

Some of the interviewees felt that it was essential for people to learn about their heritage and preserve it and others felt that learning about one's heritage should be optional. Even if some interviewees did not value learning about the culture, they wanted the opportunity to

be available for those who wanted to learn. An American Indian student said,

One of the reasons why I came back to this college was because of the cultural classes that we have here. I am taking a cultural language class. There are other things at the college that are cultural too besides the classes.

Another student said,

I don't actually value the cultural mission at all. I wouldn't have taken the classes if it wasn't required. It is best that they keep offering these courses for people who want to learn about it (Dakota culture) today.

A unique benefit from acquiring a deeper understanding of one's culture was brought out by a student, who said,

It would be nice to get kids to grow up traditional because there is no lying and stealing, no abusing your body and stuff. You always try to be honest and good to other people.

Modica et al. (2003, p. 62) quote Richard Williams, Director of the American Indian College Fund, "Tribal colleges have changed the history of Indian education in America. Indian people are now excited about going to class and proud of who they are and where they come from." A student interviewee said,

If you are like me, you have hardly any knowledge of the culture and your heritage and as you find out more about it, it makes you feel proud. It makes you feel respected and empowered by the knowledge of the myths and legends that have happened.

Another student that felt that learning about the culture would increase one's sense of identity said, "Knowing about your culture increases your self esteem. It gives you a sense of knowing who you are."

Along the same line of thought, several of the interviewees felt that knowledge of the Dakota culture was important for them because their elders or past generations would have wanted that. An American Indian elder from the reservation explained that other ethnic peoples in America can have their cultures preserved in their own country even if the people from those countries living in America lose the culture; but American Indian culture lost in America would be lost forever. An interviewee seemed to agree with this view,

We have limited numbers of members in our tribe and if you don't carry it (Dakota language and culture) on, it will be lost forever unless we get a tape recorder and tape our elders right now to preserve it.

One interviewee mentioned, as many others did, the connection to elders as a benefit of learning about the culture when she said,

It helps the younger generation deal with the older generations who have had no college education. Often the older people speak the Dakota language or they are following a traditional way of life.

The value of learning new things was brought up several times in the interviews. Students had several opportunities to bond with community people of all ages because of the diversity in ages of students in the classes; the extra-curricular cultural activities offered such as lessons in moccasin making, corn drying, and sewing; and the Indian games and wacipis (pow wows) held at the college. An interviewee said,

I've never really noticed before that every day you learn something new. When you hang around with American Indian people who you probably wouldn't normally hang around with, you learn different things. You learn how they grew up, and how you grew up. You can share that and it all comes together.

Another interviewee felt that knowledge of the past was important because, "You can learn new things. I took the beading class and I didn't know how to bead at all before that. I took Dakota culture, too."

There were mixed views from interviewees on whether or not knowledge of one's culture would lead to greater success for a student's own life. Some of those interviewed felt that individual success was more dependent on the individual rather than on cultural knowledge. Nevertheless, concern for others was apparent when the interviewees who felt the knowledge of their culture would not help them, believed the opportunity to learn about one's culture

should continue to be available at Life Circle Tribal College for the people who wanted or needed it. One interviewee stated,

I think the cultural focus is important only for people who want to learn it. My grandmother raised me and told me not to pay too much attention to culture because the traditional stuff was never going to help me. She said to go to school and church because education was the main thing. I think that understanding the past is good for those that want it, but for me, I don't dwell on the past, but rather look to the future. I don't think it would be fair to make everyone understand the culture or speak the language.

A staff person replied that even though she felt that knowledge of the Dakota culture would probably not be connected to a person's success on or off the reservation,

It is important to have cultural instruction here for people who want to learn it because it is fair that the opportunity is here.

Another student who said she felt that cultural knowledge had no impact on her success, was also concerned for the rights of other Natives in the community and said,

Many, even my age, are more interested in learning about their culture. I want to wait, but it is best that they keep offering these courses for people who want to learn about it today.

In the same line of thought that the cultural focus does not have an impact on their lives, another interviewee said, "I myself am not a traditional. I was raised off the reservation because my grandfather was white." She said

that she was not interested in learning about the culture herself but felt that the cultural focus at the college was important for some other students. She said she enjoyed watching the pow wows and things.

The combination of visual and oral learning as the preferred way of learning was described by both Indian and non-Indian teachers. One American Indian teacher remarked, "you can't tell them about a trip here or there. You need to take them, let them have the experience" (Peacock & Cleary, 1997, p.39). The instructor that was appreciated by a student interviewee for "understanding how things are" spoke of treating each student uniquely and not necessarily attempting to place an emphasis on culture. She said,

To be perfectly honest, I don't look at it as a dual mission. From my experience, I have found that students seem to want to just be treated as students rather than looked upon as Indian students. Teaching doesn't need to be done differently with American Indian students. Different learning styles are not unique to American Indians or any minority segment of the population, but go across all people and all races and need to be addressed in any educational setting.

There is value in incorporating culture into the curriculum but not for the purpose of treating American Indian students any differently from any other students. They deserve to be treated the same as you would treat any other ethnic group. The greatest disservice to American Indian students is to have low expectations of them because they are American Indians. In order for the college and the instructors to be accountable, the quality needs to be there.

American Indian students like all other students can go by the old Army commercial that challenges

everyone to "be all that you can be." It is important to have high expectations and demand responsible behavior from all students.

Similarly, Peacock and Cleary (1997) warned of the dangers of overgeneralizing that American Indian students have a distinct learning style that is holistic, creative, visual, oral, and concrete versus abstract. A teacher interviewed by Peacock and Cleary (1997) said that with Indians, you need to educate the whole person. Once you deal with the "extra baggage" that Indians bring with them and they learn to trust you, they learn exactly the same way that non-Indians learn (Peacock and Cleary, 1997).

Peacock and Cleary (1997) also agreed with the Life Circle Tribal College teacher who said, "The greatest disservice to American Indian students is to have low expectations of them because they are American Indians" (p. 3). Peacock (1997) mentions the anger and degradation of when he was told by a school counselor that he should be a carpenter and not go to college because "you people (American Indians) are good with your hands" (p. 36). Once given, labels are difficult to change no matter how sophisticated they are (Peacock and Cleary, 1997).

The staff member interviewed who said he would not have attended college had it not been for Life Circle

Tribal College implied that culture is an important concept for the college to provide, but education is equally important. He said,

We might need to expand our cultural offerings at the college, but mostly we need to get students excited about education from the time they are in grade school on up. They need to realize what it is going to take to get a bachelor's or master's degree. I will push my children to get more education than I have.

One student didn't feel that her self-esteem or sense of identity was increased with cultural knowledge and stated that success in anything had nothing to do with knowledge of one's heritage. She said, "It is just who you are that makes the most difference and is the important part." Another student added that,

Taking classes in beading and culture helps me to learn more, but I don't feel that it increases my sense of identity or helps me in other colleges or off the reservation. It just depends on who you are for the most part.

A non-Native instructor agreed that cultural knowledge may not be connected with increased self esteem and said,

American Indian students, like everyone else, will function successfully or not in a multicultural world depending on who they are and how they see themselves. Success in more advanced studies will probably not be related to cultural knowledge, but rather to the determination of the student.

Another young student who said, "I don't actually value the cultural mission at all. It doesn't have any effect on me.

I wouldn't have taken courses in it if it wasn't required" did seem to value attending college in her community. She stated, "I felt more comfortable going to a tribal college. It was a good place to start. I felt comfortable being around my people."

A non-student, community member shared that she thought that preservation of the culture was good, but "they are dying out as we go along." She added that the blood is thinning and that many of "our kids can't be enrolled because they are not enough Native." She wasn't concerned because, "you end up with all these people who marry each other and you end up one big happy family anyway."

Many of the interviewees felt that it was helpful to know and understand the past in order to move into the future. Others just felt that it was useless for even leaders of the tribe to go back to the past.

[We should] just move forward. If cultural courses are added, I would like to learn more about the tribal government and about what we could do to help the reservation now. We can't change the history.

Another interviewee felt that tribal government courses may not benefit a leader as much as a good basic education would even if they did not have knowledge about their culture. On the other hand, a young student that felt

cultural knowledge would have no impact on her success

wanted to learn some of the Dakota history,

I want to learn about it, how we first came about. The only thing I am worried about is if I would judge these people [presumably White people] because of what happened. I am not racist.

Whether people view the cultural education as something

they feel they need and want or not, it may be as a non-

American Indian instructor said,

There is value in teaching beading and Dakota language at a tribal college, but the culture cannot be taught in a classroom. Norwegians can eat lefse and American Indians can learn to bead, but culture is part of an inner being that can't be only taught. You can experience things relevant to a culture, but no one can teach you to be Norwegian or Indian. Your culture is the essence of which you are—your history and language.

The experience that the interviewee above was speaking

about can often be found only in family and community

relations. In this community however, the tribal college

and the community seemed to exist almost as one entity.

Survey results. Interviewees seemed to appreciate the opportunity to have culture-based instruction and seemed to enjoy the cultural courses such as beading and language.

Almost all interviewees also suggested that having faculty and staff that understand the Dakota culture, values, and learning styles and what the students face in their lives outside of the college was very important to success in

college. It was unclear from the interviews whether the students and staff perceived Life Circle Tribal College as fulfilling the cultural mission with courses such as beading, quilting, and language and/or by using an approach to education where culture is embedded into every aspect of the college. This ambiguity gave rise to the first survey.

The demographics of the first survey were that it was taken by 29 females and five males. Of that group, 21 were between the ages of 19 and 30, seven were between the ages of 31 and 40, and six were over 40 (with two of those six being over 50). This was indicative of the predominantly female student body and it did seem that it was not uncommon for three generations of families to be attending Life Circle Tribal College at the same time.

The first question on the survey asked students to rank in order of effectiveness (1-3) how they saw the cultural mission of Life Circle Tribal College fulfilled, with one being most important. The first choices were weighted with three points, second choices weighted with two points, and third choices weighted with one point. The mission statement was posted throughout the college campus. The resulting percentages represented the proportion of weighted responses given among the set of responses. The

results suggested that 29 percent of the respondents to the survey saw the college as fulfilling its cultural mission in the area of offering cultural classes in things such as beading and Dakota language. The next highest choice (20 percent) was that they felt staff and faculty at the college understood and worked with students in a manner that reflected the unique learning styles of the Dakota people. The third most common choice (16 percent) was that the college fulfilled its cultural mission by hosting community functions such as wacipis, Indian games, and gatherings. Lesser choices were in the areas of bringing culture into general education courses, using traditional rituals such as drums and Dakota prayers during ceremonies, and offering extracurricular cultural activities. See the following Table 1. Results from survey I, Question 1 (n=34).

Table 1

Results From Survey I, Question 1 (n=34)

Rank in order of effectiveness (1-3) how you see the cultural mission of this college as being fulfilled with one being most important.					
Activity	Number of respondents that chose this first	Number of respondents that chose this second	Number of respondents that chose this third	Weighted Average (first times 3, second times 2, third times 1)	%
The college offers cultural classes in things such as beading and Dakota language	13	7	6	59	29%
Staff and faculty at the college understand and work with students in a manner that reflects the unique learning styles of the Dakota people	8	5	6	40	20%
The college hosts community functions such as pow wows, Indian games, and gatherings.	3	7	9	32	16%
The college brings culture to general education courses	6	4	3	29	14%
Additional rituals such as drums and Dakota prayers are used during ceremonies	2	9	5	29	14%
The college offers extracurricular cultural activities.	2	2	4	14	7%

The interviewees expressed some concern over the loss of the Dakota culture and language if it was not preserved by and taught at the tribal college. The second question of the survey arose from this concern over the loss of the Dakota language to determine if more people thought it was important to preserve language. The respondents were asked to rank (1-3 with 1 being most important) in order of

importance, the Dakota cultural area most essential to preserve. Again, the first choices were multiplied by three points, second choices by two points and third choices by one point. The respondents suggested that preserving the Dakota language and culture were the most important areas with each receiving 32 percent. The next highest area chosen was Dakota history with 27 percent. Religion received six percent of the choices and art received three percent. Here, the percentages represented the proportion of responses within the question. For example, Dakota language had 13 first choice rankings, 9 second choice rankings, and 8 third choice rankings. It received 32 percent of the overall weighted rankings. See the following Table 2. Results from Survey I, Question 2 (n-34).

Table 2
Results from Survey I, Question 2 (n-34)

Rank (1-3 with 1 being most important) in order of importance to you, the Dakota cultural area most essential to preserve					
Culture	First Choice	Second Choice	Third Choice	Weighted Total	Percent
Dakota Culture	11	13	7	66	32%
Dakota Language	13	9	8	65	32%
Dakota History	7	9	16	55	27%
Dakota Religion	2	2	2	12	06%
Dakota Art	1	1	1	6	03%

Questions three through eight. An analysis of the data from the interviewees and the review of literature revealed several other areas of interest for survey questions. Questions were asked on the survey whether respondents felt that the cultural mission of the college would have an impact on the success of students as they transferred to mainstream institutions, the likelihood of students coming back to the reservation to work after obtaining advanced degrees, and the need for cultural education as a basis for being a tribal leader. Other questions asked whether students and staff felt that knowledge of one's own culture would increase one's sense of identity, self esteem, and acceptance of diversity.

Results suggested that 83 percent of the respondents felt that knowledge of one's culture would increase their success at mainstream colleges, and 88 percent felt that knowledge of one's culture would be a factor in deciding to return to the reservation to work after obtaining advanced degrees. An unanticipated outcome was that only 82 percent felt that it was necessary to have knowledge of one's culture to be an effective tribal leader. When asked, on questions six and seven of survey one, if the respondents felt that knowledge of one's culture would help to increase

their self esteem and sense of identity, 97 and 94 percent respectively felt that knowledge of one's culture would increase one's self esteem and sense of identity. For question eight, 83 percent thought that knowledge of one's own culture would increase one's acceptance of diversity and other cultures (question 8. survey I). See the following Table 3. Results from Survey I, Questions 3-8 (n=34).

Table 3
Results from Survey I, Questions 3-8 (n=34)

Question	Yes	%	No	%
3. Knowledge of one's culture increases success of students as they transfer to mainstream institutions	29	83%	5	17%
4. Knowledge of culture increases the likelihood of students coming back to the reservation to work after obtaining advanced degrees	30	88%	4	12%
5. Knowledge of Dakota culture is needed as a basis for being a tribal leader	28	82%	6	18%
6. Knowledge of one's own culture would increase one's sense of identity	32	94%	2	6%
7. Knowledge of one's own culture would increase one's self esteem,	33	97%	1	3%
8. Knowledge of one's own culture would increase one's acceptance of diversity.	29	83%	5	17%

An open-ended question was asked at the end of the first survey to determine how important the students and staff thought the cultural portion of the college mission was. The question asked whether they felt that culture should be added to the curriculum or the curriculum be built around the culture. They mostly interpreted the question to mean the more visible offering of cultural

courses. The comments produced mixed results and were mostly taken as valuable individual comments rather than categorized into whether they felt the curriculum should be built around the culture or culture added to the curriculum. (See Table 4 for comments). The students who responded went from feeling that Dakota culture and language should be mandated in the curriculum to only optional and to a few that felt it was not necessary at all. One student said,

We should preserve and teach our language and culture. This is what makes us American Indians so unique and if we don't, our heritage will end once our elders are no longer alive. Our culture and education should go hand in hand.

Another one wrote, "I think that culture should be added to everything you do." The following idea came from another student,

I think tribal colleges should have as much culture and American Indian history as possible. I know some colleges require Spanish courses. Why couldn't tribal colleges require courses related to their tribal background?

With a shift to the respondents that felt culture should be an optional part of their learning, one student said,

I think the culture should be taught in Dakota culture and other courses related to culture. I don't think we should implement culture into the curriculum of core courses and general education requirements.

Another student said, "Culture isn't the most important part of the college, education is; but culture should play a major role." The response from another student was,

As an educational institution, I think academics come first. It is important to know and understand the culture; however on a personal level depending on the importance to the individual. I plan on obtaining my education first and then will take the time to learn and understand the culture.

Two out of thirty-three students responded in the optional comment section of the survey in a way that seemed to indicate that they felt it was not necessary to include Dakota culture in the course offerings. One wrote, "The college could offer more information on other cultures." The other student wrote,

It is hard to implement Dakota culture into the curriculum because we live in the Whiteman's world. I feel strongly about it especially if we want to live off the reservation.

See Table 4 on Comments About Culture and Curriculum.

Table 4

Comments About Culture and Curriculum

Comments on "Do you feel that culture should be added to the curriculum or the curriculum built around culture?"
Curriculum most important--culture should be only added rather than the base
Culture is not the most important part of this college. Education is, but culture should play a major role.
It needs to be taught in the curriculum so that the students can learn more and tell their kids and so on.
I think culture should be added to the curriculum.
Yes, culture should be added to the curriculum because it's important that the students learn about their language while going here.

Table 4 Cont.

Comments About Culture and Curriculum

I think the culture should be taught in Dakota culture and other courses related to culture. I don't think we should implement culture into the curriculum of core courses and general education requirements.
I think culture should be added to the curriculum rather than the curriculum built around it.
The American Indian culture is very important. By teaching culture classes here, it has encouraged students, both Indian and non-Indian, to take courses to learn the culture and/or language. It is a great opportunity.
I like the idea of this college taking steps to promote our language.
I think it should be added to the curriculum.
As an educational institution, I think academics come first. It is important to know and understand the culture on a personal level, depending on the importance to the individual. I plan on obtaining my education and then will take the time to learn and understand the culture.
Art--I think arts and crafts are an important part of our culture. If we had something constructive to do and to teach our kids, they could stay away from TV games. During this time, they could talk about cultural values, language, and music. This is how culture and language were taught. Why not keep it that way.
Yes, culture should be added to the curriculum because it's important that the students learn about their language while going here.
Culture most important--curriculum built around it
I think curriculum should be implemented within the culture.
The curriculum should be culture-based.
I believe it (Dakota language) should not be an option to learn. It should be required in the curriculum.
I agree with this idea, because we should preserve our language and culture. This is what makes us American Indians so unique. And if we don't, our heritage will end once our elders are no longer alive. Our culture and education should go hand in hand.
I think culture should be added to the curriculum. It should start here and work its way down the grade level. When I was in grade school and high school, I didn't have a choice.
I think tribal colleges should have as much culture and American Indian history as possible. I know some colleges require Spanish courses. Why couldn't tribal colleges require courses related to their tribal background?
We need to implement our culture into the college.
Dakota language should be one of the mandatory classes.
I feel that this college should offer more classes in the area of the Dakota culture as a whole--culture, language, spirituality, and way of life.
I think that culture should be added to everything you do.
I think [cultural] curriculum should be implemented within the culture.

Table 4 Cont.

Comments About Culture and Curriculum

Other comments
It is hard to implement Dakota culture into the curriculum because we live in the Whiteman's world. I feel strongly about it especially if we want to live off the reservation.
Hosting a pow-wow
I would like to see this college host a pow-wow.
The college could also offer more information on other cultures.
To develop a Dakota studies in fine arts

The second survey also contained an open-ended question. Almost every survey respondent responded to this optional question on what cultural courses they would like to take. Seven of the twenty-four people surveyed said they would like to learn more about beading, quilting, and moccasin and dance outfit making. Six of those seven specifically listed dance outfit making. One student wrote,

I think dance outfit making would be a wonderful class to be offered. Many people would benefit from it on designs. Also I would like to make my family outfits. I know there are others that feel the same.

Another respondent to this second optional question said they would like to see a course in parenting offered—"the way it was traditionally done." A desire to learn some traditional parenting skills was also mentioned in the interviews.

Other areas of interest from the comments included the following: six people mentioned that they would like to

learn about traditional plants and herbs, five wanted to learn more about the language, two wanted to learn Indian games and wacipi songs. There were also two people who would like to have the opportunity to take more art classes. One of them said,

I would like to see more art classes offered, many great artists could come of it. I have seen a lot of people who can paint and draw and don't know what to do with it.

Three of those surveyed would also like to learn more about American Indian literature.

Another area of interest in this comment section was brought out by the fact that the sovereignty of the reservation created the need for tribal leaders. Five of the respondents felt that the college should offer courses in history, tribal government or economics. One of these respondents said,

I Would like to see a two-year degree in Dakota or in tribal policies and procedures offered at the college to prepare leaders in the community.

See the following Survey II comments on courses desired to be taken in Table 5. (n=24). They have been somewhat categorized, but many fell into more than one category.

Table 5

Comments about Courses Desired (n=24)

Comments on, "What courses would you like to see offered at this
Beading, Quilting and Dance-related
Beading, quilting, moccasin making and dance outfit making

Table 5, Cont.

Comments About Courses Desired

I think dance outfit making would be a wonderful class to be offered. Many people would benefit from it on designs.
I would like to make my family dance outfits. I know there are others that feel the same way.
Quilting and beading
Beading and making dance outfits
Traditional use of Plants
I would like to learn more on traditional plants.
Moccasin making, quilting, traditional use of plants
I would choose dance outfit making and traditional use of plants. I would choose traditional use of plants because I understand some of these plants were used for medicine.
I would like to see more cultural related courses such as quilting, moccasin making and use of herbs.
I would like to learn more on the traditional use of plants and the dietary intake of the earlier American Indians, Because many Americans are overweight or don't exercise or both, a course like that could
Language
Traditional use of plants and Dakota language
I think they should try to have Indian games and tribal language
I would really like to learn more about my culture and I would enjoy learning how to speak my native language.
History and Tribal Government
I would like to learn how the tribal government has changed since elections have been put in place.
Traditional use of plants, Indian legends, Tribal government/politics and how it affects the community
History of how the cavalry affected the local American Indians, how the different religious organizations affected Dakota people (history)
I Would like to see a 2-year degree in Dakota or in tribal policy and procedures.
In order to understand living on a reservation you need to know the history, makeup, and economical functions. I think that today's youth and college students need to get more knowledge with the community and
Art, Literature, and Music
I would like to learn different pow wow songs, honor songs, and peyote songs.
Choir and music would be a nice addition.
I would like to see more art classes being taught. Many great artists could come out of it. I have seen a lot of people who can paint and draw and don't know what to do with it.
American Indian literature--I think learning about our culture is fun and interesting.
Beading, dance outfit making, multicultural ethics, American Indian literature
Parenting
I would like to see this college offer a course on parenting and the way it was traditionally done.

Theme III-College is the Community Key

Relationships between Life Circle Tribal College and the community are important. The college is not only the key to preserving the culture and language, but also the key for improving relationships with elders, and improving living conditions in the community. Fann (2003) states that tribal colleges engage in the development of local economies directly and for the long term. They contribute directly through institutional spending and job creation. Indirectly, long term effects come from the fact that graduates of tribal colleges often seek employment locally and the tribal colleges also provide needed services to support libraries, health care, cultural preservation and economic development in the community. At Life Circle Tribal College, it was apparent that the community was very important--serving the community and teaching education was thought to be the only avenue to improvement by American Indian students becoming educated and caring enough to come back to improve the community. Included in the Community Service Department at Life Circle Tribal College are programs for the day care, the library, health and nutrition, and language preservation. They may not agree on everything, but as Dr. Nadie said,

Yes, we have issues, we have barriers and gaps, and we don't always agree; but when it gets right down to it, the entire community really does believe that education is the gateway.

Interviews. Most interviewees agreed that the reservation community needed American Indians who obtained advanced degrees to come home in order to improve the situation in the community. The main reason given by interviewees for this was that they understand the situation and would therefore be better able to solve the problems. They often mentioned that the high unemployment on the reservation made it difficult to return to the community. A staff member said,

I would like to think that learning about culture will encourage people to come back to the reservation after they have obtained advanced degrees, but we have found out that, as a community, our tribal leaders need to have positions for them to come back to.

Another respondent felt that an understanding of the culture might help people to come back because,

You see the problems and you see what can be changed. It is not so much about understanding the heritage as it is working toward the future and understanding what is happening. I think culture-based instruction is necessary to prepare students for roles in tribal governments.

A problem that was brought up a couple of times in interviews involved educators coming back to their own reservation to teach. A student said,

Sometimes it is difficult for educators to return to the reservation where they grew up and then find they need to discipline their relatives. They may rather teach in another tribal community.

This concern was addressed by another interviewee that said,

Well, they say it is hard to teach in your own community. So, it is really up to the individual on how they approach that. To me, going back to your own community and knowing people, helps you more than it hinders you, because you know how to deal with them. You know who their family is, you might know a little bit of their background, and you might have a different approach on how to address them. Maybe there is a different way that you could help them, rather than having it hinder you.

Despite the problems of returning to the reservation community after obtaining advanced degrees, Life Circle Tribal college personnel were optimistic that returning to the community was very important to the students and staff of the college because they understand the issues and problems. They understood that the community really needs to have professional people back with the credentials. Many of the employees of the college and local businesses were American Indians who had come back to work on the reservation.

Even the interviewees that did not have an interest in learning Dakota culture seemed committed to returning to the reservation to work. The same people were also concerned that "there were no jobs for them to return to."

Some appeared to base their decision to return home on where they wanted to raise their families. A student that said she did not value the cultural portion of education at the tribal college for herself said that, in a way, the knowledge of the Dakota culture did make one want to return to the reservation after obtaining advanced degrees. She added,

(This is) because there aren't a lot of educated American Indians here and we need to set an example for our younger generation and be role models. It all depends on where the money is and if my family wants to come back here and live.

A community member said she thought American Indians from this reservation would come back home, but it was going to be different because the younger generation would be more educated and there would not be as large a division between Natives and Whites. She said, "The way the kids are brought up, they don't know that they are Indian." Another interviewee shared that she thought American Indians would return to the reservation because,

the reservation is a good place to raise your kids. Here you feel safe and the community here encourages education. They give you time off and they help pay for your school.

Benefits to the community from the cultural mission of the college also included the fact that community gatherings, such as wacipis, were often held at the

college. In addition, the ceremonies at the college, such as graduations, were done in a very traditional manner and the entire community was welcome to attend.

Almost all students and staff interviewed seemed to treasure the use of tradition at community and college gatherings and ceremonies. It appears that often students and staff perceived the definition of culture-based education as the three credit hour Dakota language or culture course required for graduation or as other Dakota culture courses offered as options. The more submerged culture that was the essence of the college appeared to be appreciated by almost everyone but was often not included in the perception of culture-based education. For example, the same staff member, quoted earlier, who felt learning the language was a waste of time said, "I like the use of traditional music, prayers, and dress at things such as graduation ceremonies. It makes them more personal because we are used to it." Another student felt that it was a good thing to have community celebrations such as wacipis at the college. She added that,

When we have a pow-wow, we are almost always honoring someone like our veterans. It also brings good feelings, you know; we are happy to be together, our families are there and we get to see our relatives that we don't get to see every day. The songs they sing are like the songs that our grandfathers sang a

long time ago. It just brings a place of togetherness and it is usually a place where we are happy. I wish we could have more of these.

Another young interviewee stated what many implied when she said,

I like them (traditional ceremonies) because they bring the people together. When they use drums at graduation, it keeps that part alive. It is like with the Dakota prayer that is said at most of the celebrations, you know it's there even if you don't understand it.

Even if the interviewees did not see the cultural component of the mission as being helpful to them and their education, many of them seemed to feel as the interviewee that said it was "just nice" to have traditional rituals at graduations, because "that is what we are used to." Another student who was disinterested in learning about the Dakota culture said, "I attend them (wacipis) every year, so I do value them." Eagleton (2004) spoke of this merged culture when he stated that "It (Culture) is the taken-for-granted behavior that people know without knowing it" (Eagleton, 2004, p. 2).

The college seemed to be viewed by the community as the way to preserve the Dakota culture and language. A visit with an elder of the community, that taught Dakota culture at Life Circle Tribal College and was also very fluent in speaking the Dakota language, provided some

insight into many of the activities stemming from the Community Services Department of the college for Dakota language preservation. She spoke of a survey in which all 72 respondents suggested that they used Dakota language more often than they had previously after attending up to 78 cultural activities between 2005 and 2007. The cultural activities she spoke about were usually luncheons combined with language lessons that were open to the entire community. She spoke of other activities which involved about four dinners during the year that were also open to the community. Participants would eat together and then converse and tell jokes in only Dakota rather than English for the evening. These dinners were called "okodakici." She said they were trying to get away from the English term for some of their activities. For example, she said they use the term "wacipi" rather than pow wow, a White man's word. She also explained that the jokes were much funnier in the Dakota language than they were when translated into English.

The Dakota culture instructor above said there were approximately 132 living fluent speakers of the Dakota language on this reservation, but most of them were elders and she was concerned that they would "take the language

with them" when they died. She said, "The 'second learners' do not know how to speak the old Dakota language and words are changing." She explained that long ago there was one language that became divided with the reservations into Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota languages; but even in the Dakota language there are different dialects. To help explain a difference between Dakota and Lakota languages, she told of the word, kucea, which can mean sick in Lakota and lazy in Dakota. She and a co-worker managed the language preservation program at Life Circle Tribal College. Her co-worker, also a tribal elder, was fluent in Dakota language, but they spoke somewhat different dialects. (Dakota culture instructor, 2007, personal communication).

The interviewees had some mixed feelings on preserving the Dakota language. Some young and old interviewees were concerned that the Dakota culture and language would be lost forever if action to preserve it was not taken quickly. Learning the Dakota language in various degrees was valued by almost all interviewees. One interviewee shared that learning the Dakota language had made it easier to learn Spanish. Another student shared the concerns of many when she said,

I believe that in forty years or less our language will be lost. My mother is 47 and she can understand it and speak it a little, but she isn't fluent. I only understand the colors, numbers and a few basic words. If we don't carry on the language it will be lost forever. My grandmother records songs and stories in Dakota and then repeats them in English for us.

Another interviewee felt that preservation of the Dakota language might not be important. She shared that

My older sister's first language was Sioux and when she started school, it was really hard on her. She couldn't learn English as easily, so my parents stopped right there and they wouldn't teach us two younger ones the Sioux language because it was messing us up.

One student put it in these words,

I think it might be a waste of time to learn the language; because, how often, when you have a job, are you going to have to say it in Dakota.

As DeLarios (2003) pointed out, it was likely that the lack of time to learn two languages was a major factor in any community. A busy mother and staff person said, "It would take the time of learning two words rather than one."

Second survey. The questions in the second survey came from the perceived concerns of the people on this reservation that they would lose their language if they did not begin to use it. It is easier to want to learn a language than to actually learn it, but the desire is definitely the beginning. A question on this survey asked respondents if they thought it was necessary to preserve the

Dakota language in order to preserve the Dakota culture. Respondents were also asked how well they spoke the Dakota language, with what degree of fluency would they like to learn to speak the Dakota language, and what degree of fluency in the Dakota language would they desire for their children and grandchildren?

The demographics of the second survey included 22 females that responded and two males. Sixteen of the respondents (67 percent) were between the ages of 20-30, three were between the ages of 31-40, and five were over the age of 40 with 3 of these five over 50 years old.

The second survey's results suggest that 96 percent of the respondents (n=24) felt that the preservation of the Dakota language was necessary in order to preserve the Dakota culture. The survey also suggested that 83 percent of the respondents felt that they knew at least a few words in the Dakota language and one person was fluent in it. Sixty-three percent felt that they would like to learn to be fluent in speaking the Dakota language, 29 percent said they would like to learn only a few words or enough to be able to understand and communicate with their elders. The others, eight percent, had no interest in learning it. The same respondents desired a little more fluency for their children

than for themselves. Sixty-seven percent felt they would like to have their children be fluent in the Dakota language and 25 percent would like to have their children be able to know a few words in Dakota well enough to communicate with their Dakota elders. See results in Table 6 (n=24).

Table 6
Results from Survey II, Language Skills (n=24)

	Few Words	%	Fluently	%	None	%
Assess your own Dakota language skills	20	83%	1	4%	3	13%
What skill level do you desire?	7	29%	15	63%	2	8%
What skill level desired for children?	6	25%	16	67%	2	8%

Theme IV—Relationships off Reservation

The importance of relationships with those outside the reservation was also recognized. Ambler (2005) quoted a leader from Menominee as saying the college wants the tribe to be successful, but it also wants students to understand the mainstream cultural system and what is required for them to survive in it. It appeared from literature, interviews, and the surveys that often American Indians felt that preserving their own heritage and teaching their culture to the people on the reservation would give them a stronger sense of identity to successfully extend into other non-Indian communities and mainstream colleges. Modica et al. (2003, p.18) quoted David Risling, a retired director and professor of American Indian studies at the

University of California, "You can live in two worlds. Get to know both worlds and put all the spokes together".

Risling had explained that his father told him that Indians were like a dot in the center of a wheel, just one percent of the population. He said "We may have to live in the dominant society, but we are still Indian people. The most important thing is to be who you are" (Risling, in Modica et al., (2003, p.18).

Interviews. When asked the question about knowledge of one's own culture affecting multicultural relations, the results were divided equally. Some interviewees expressed the idea that people who know themselves are better equipped to deal with people of other cultures. It was stated,

Our survivability, our resilience, and our strength come from culture. I believe knowledge of one's culture does give one the strength in identity to go off the reservation to the non Indian institutions.

Other responses suggested that successful relationships in a multicultural world depend more on each individual. One interviewee said, "If people have education and learn what they are supposed to, it doesn't matter what race you are, you will do fine." A non-American Indian staff person interviewed felt in a similar way and said,

American Indians, like everyone else, will function successfully or not in a multicultural world depending on who they are and how they see themselves. Anytime one knows oneself better as a person, it is easier to relate to all other people. American Indians who learn about the traditional respect of the Dakota people will extend that respect across to other cultures.

Almost all of the students and staff interviewed at the tribal college felt that a knowledge and understanding of their own culture would help them to be more understanding of multicultural diverseness. A student said,

I feel that knowledge of one's cultural heritage will help [us] to be more understanding of other peoples' cultures and enable us to relate more successfully in a multicultural world. Where I work, it certainly helps to understand people when you know where they are coming from.

A few of the interviewees mentioned that they would like other cultures to understand American Indians too. One interviewee that had attended secondary school off the reservation said,

I was going to school off the reservation, and a lot of those teachers probably didn't know how I was raised or anything dealing with me or other students that lived out here. If they would have known what was going on, how things were, they would probably have a better understanding. There were times that I felt some things weren't right or that they didn't understand what I was trying to say. It might have come out in my grades.

The president of the college continued to express the need for non-American Indians to understand that,

We think and see the world differently, we understand differently, and we learn differently. That has to do with being Native and with being indigenous. It is a very different because we are holistic in our thinking, we are very family orientated, and we are really attuned to relationships, oral story telling, and oral traditions. We are very visual. We like to meet and to talk. We learn and think differently. So culture in a tribal college is not just having a course or even an Indian studies department or program. It is how we conduct business, it is how we function and it is how our policies are developed and implemented.

Summary

Qualitative and quantitative data from this study suggested that the participants in the study felt that Life Circle Tribal College fulfilled its cultural mission both by providing opportunities to learn about the Dakota culture and language and also by providing staff and faculty that understood the uniqueness of the American Indian students. Respondents were divided on whether or not they believed that preserving, teaching, and understanding the Dakota culture, history, value system, and language were important to success at this tribal college. About half of the interview respondents felt that success in college and life on or off their reservation was due to the individual. One interviewee said,

Actually, many of the students attending here probably would have a problem if they entered a mainstream college first. That is not because of any lack of intelligence but because of cultural difference.

Another interviewee stated, "I don't think I would have any problem getting along in a mainstream college with it or without it (greater understanding and knowledge of Dakota culture)."

The greatest amount of consensus in the study was in the area of the impact that the cultural focus of Life Circle Tribal College had on the community. Most felt that the cultural focus of Life Circle Tribal College was important as the key for community improvement by having educated citizens return to the community to work and lead. Community impact includes the preservation of the Dakota language which was mostly thought to be important, but the extent of immersion that was desired was difficult to assess. Most everyone interviewed and surveyed seemed to be satisfied with knowing a limited amount of words in the Dakota language rather than becoming fluent in it. Many interviewees desired fluency in the Dakota language for their children. The children in the community are given an opportunity to learn Dakota in the K-12 school and the language preservation program at Life Circle Tribal College provides several immersion activities along with beginning and advanced Dakota language courses.

Many respondents also felt that knowledge of one's culture would be helpful in establishing an individual's identity and felt that might aid in producing successful relationships with the multicultural world outside the reservation. Others felt that relationships with the world outside the reservation were mostly dependent on each individual.

The cohesiveness of the Life Circle Tribal College and community members was evident in each area of the study. They did not feel the need for all members to think alike in order to strongly support each other and their Dakota culture.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS

This study assumes that the culture-based approach to education that is claimed to be used at American Indian tribal colleges appears to successfully provide affordable and accessible higher education to students in tribal communities and prepares them for employment or additional education on the reservation or in the multicultural world. In addition, this culture-based approach to education provides partial solutions for preserving tribal culture and language in the community and hope for improvement in the future of the community.

Life Circle Tribal College (2005) states its mission is,

consistent with its purpose as a tribal institution of higher learning, which includes a learning environment where students can discover, through the educational process, how to live in a diverse multi-cultural society (p. 63).

Life Circle Tribal College claims to fulfill this purpose by offering a curriculum that allows students to prepare for employment in the local job market or continue to a four-year institution. Life Circle Tribal College

curriculum also includes classes in Dakota language and history for both degree and vocational programs to help students understand and preserve the knowledge of the Dakota culture. "In all aspects of college study, attention is given to maintaining relevancy to the dominant Dakota culture and tradition" (Life Circle Tribal College, p. 63).

The cultural mission at Life Circle Tribal College was defined in different ways by educators, students, and staff at Life Circle Tribal College. It was interpreted by some as bringing traditional Dakota components into general education courses. To still others, it was understood as offering courses in Dakota Language, beading, dance, and tribal government. To others it was taken to mean having staff and faculty who understood and addressed the values, learning styles, history, and lifestyles of the Dakota people as they worked with the students. To many, the cultural mission at Life Circle Tribal College included all of the above.

Observations, interviews, and two surveys were used in this study to interpret how American Indian students and staff at Life Circle Tribal College perceived Life Circle Tribal College as fulfilling the cultural portion of its mission and how they perceived the impact of the culture-

based approach to education used there on students' lives in their educational pursuits within the college, on their current and future relationships with the reservation community, and on their future education and relationships in mainstream colleges and communities outside the reservation. This section consists of four parts including the summary, discussion, implications, and recommendations.

Summary

Brown (2003) believed that the three main reasons that tribal colleges were created were to provide access to quality higher education for American Indians while they can stay close to home, provide a strong sense of community through cultural education, and prepare American Indian students for mainstream institutions. These purposes also appeared to be the main areas of focus at Life Circle Tribal College. The establishment of tribal colleges took advantage of the widening of the "safety-zone" that was explicated by Lomawaima and McCarty (2006). They said that the increase in tolerance and support of diversity by the federal government in educational policies was critical to democracy. "We view democracy as a value, a policy, and a practice that respects, protects, and promotes diversity and human rights. Critical democracy demands that the

United States be a nation of educational opportunity for all, not merely a homogenizing and standardizing machine" (Lomawaima and McCarty, 2006, p. 8).

Access to quality higher education. Life Circle Tribal College seeks to provide quality education with a culture-based approach that fulfills the cultural portion of the mission statement. Quality education was evidenced by accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and by successful completions, transfers, and employment of many of the students. This claim to culture-based higher education was interpreted by the leaders of Life Circle Tribal College as not only offering cultural-specific courses such as Dakota beading, language, and history in a Dakota setting; but also encouraging teachers and staff at Life Circle Tribal College to understand the challenges facing each student in and out of the college setting. Faculty were encouraged to present the higher education experience in a context of cultural understanding of history, values, language, learning styles, and relationships of the Dakota Indians. This type of presentation could, and often did, mean giving students the opportunity to,

- choose Indian literature or research topics in an English or speech class;
- learn Dakota names for plants or study about how American Indians used them in a science class;
- learn more about the American Indian and white settlers' relations in a history class;
- draw, paint, carve, bead, or learn about American Indian art in a humanities class;
- study the economics of reservations in an economics class.

The instructors appeared to try to incorporate culture into their courses where it was appropriate. Nevertheless, even when American Indian examples and choices were not available to the students in a general education class, the essence of the Dakota culture was in the environment of the college and each classroom.

Provide a strong sense of community. Life Circle Tribal College is committed to working with the tribal community to improve the community and preserving and teaching the Dakota culture and language. This commitment to the community was fulfilled partially by cultural ceremonies held at Life Circle Tribal College that included the community members and also by the development of the

Community Services Division at Life Circle Tribal College. The Community Services Division at Life Circle Tribal College works to rejuvenate the Dakota language of the community with its language preservation program. It also houses a community library, a community health and nutrition program, and a day care. It is hoped that students who obtain advanced degrees will return to the community to lead and make a difference.

Life Circle Tribal College seems to have a focus of interest on education similar to the master of ceremonies at the cultural gathering for language preservation,

We need to not only have an interest in economic development but also in human development (Cultural Gathering, 2005).

Prepare American Indian students for mainstream institutions. The students and staff of Life Circle Tribal College appeared to be acutely aware of the fact that they lived in a multicultural world and would like to successfully attend and graduate with advanced degrees from mainstream institutions and interact successfully with other cultures. They also desire to have non-Indians understand and respect them and their culture.

Discussion

Life Circle Tribal College seemed alive with Dakota culture that was so embedded that it could not be separated out. Life Circle Tribal College's claimed culture-based education included instructors that used a more visual and hands-on form of instruction. The visual, hands-on form of instruction was evident in the beading, art, carpentry, and technology courses and one could also see general education classroom instructors using tablet PCs, smart boards, PowerPoint presentations, and objects such as cylinders and cones in the math courses or state-of-the-art equipment for experiments in the science courses for instruction. Swisher and Deyhle (1989) stated that American Indians learn to do things at home by observing and watching rather than being told; therefore they benefit from a more visual, hands-on teaching situation in school rather than lecture.

The culture-based instruction purported to be used there also included personnel that tried to understand what life was like for the students outside of the college—what they experienced, the importance of relationships, the challenging economic conditions, and the lack of employment on the reservation.

The observed approach to education used at Life Circle Tribal College involved both state-of-the-art technology in a classroom setting with a number of students and also one-on-one facilitation. All classrooms were equipped with wireless technology for the students and with instructor stations that included tablet computers and mounted display units. The computer labs were equipped with the latest versions of software and operating systems. Instructional tools such as Smart Boards (interactive white boards) were available and often used by instructors. In addition, instructors worked with students individually, sitting side-by-side at computers completing assignments or doing research or fixing a home computer in the back of a computer lab. Students and staff personnel were often seen looking through various options to make obtaining a college degree a possibility for the student who also happened to be a busy parent. Help and support for students perusing an education appeared to be right around a corner in an office or a classroom.

The teaching style used at this college suggested that the faculty and staff understood that people learn differently and the importance of addressing different learning styles in all areas of education--American Indians

or any other race. Instructors often added the use of technology to classroom lectures in the form of PowerPoint presentations, LCD displays, and student computer applications to show students how problems and assignments could be completed as in accounting or technology courses. Courses such as accounting were often held in computer labs where students could obtain practical experience while concepts were being taught. As Swisher and Deyhle (1989) suggested, American Indian students use caution when demonstrating learned skills and prefer to wait until they have observed and know how to do a skill without making a mistake before trying it.

In addition, Life Circle Tribal College's culture-based approach to education included an atmosphere that captured and conveyed the cultural heritage. Dakota culture was the essence of Life Circle Tribal College's atmosphere with its Indian artifacts and traditions, buffalo in the hills behind it, Native drummers and singers at gatherings, and people who treated others with respect and hospitality. The atmosphere and infrastructure were like examples from Thelin (2004) when he wrote of how important it is for even the architecture of a college to capture and convey history. ANKN (1998) may have described Life Circle Tribal

College when stating that culture-based education is far more than the incorporation of cultural events and traditional skills into the curriculum. The goal of culture-based education is to support individuals and build a sense of pride and self esteem in all who wish to affirm their culture.

The claimed Life Circle Tribal College (2006) values of respect for others, education, and working together were also evidenced in the atmosphere at Life Circle Tribal College by how faculty, staff, and students interacted with each other and treated each other well. Respect was modeled from the way the president treated employees, the way staff acted toward each other and students, and the way students reacted and responded with an attitude of respect for the college itself and other students and staff. Sharing food and good conversation together at Life Circle Tribal College was often an important way of bonding as a cultural group. Monthly employee luncheons, soup and frybread (wahanpi apetu) meals, and buffets shared at celebrations with the community were times to enjoy friends, to honor people, or to show recognition and appreciation.

Community and college gatherings included ceremonies, wacipis, and the cultural language revitalizing gathering.

Ceremonies often consisted of eating and enjoying each other's company, speeches from community leaders that had obtained advanced degrees and returned to the reservation, traditional singers and drummers doing honor songs for community members that had given their lives for their country, and a local elder saying prayers in Dakota language. The décor was usually in traditional (bright, basic) colors. Traditional gifts such as star-quilts were often given to the persons being honored. Students and staff suggested that they appreciated, enjoyed, and attended the gatherings and ceremonies that the college held with the community. Often it was mentioned that they were fun because people get together, it was what they were used to, it was a time to honor someone, or it was just nice to be reminded of the traditional rituals--such as the drum symbolizing the heart beat of the community.

Student and staff perceptions of impact of culture-based education. There were mixed feelings from students and staff of Life Circle Tribal College on the importance and effects of culture-based education. Gurneau (2002) recognized the variations in perception of culture-based education that extend from indigenous cultures and languages being at the core of the intellectual vision with

the rest of the curriculum revolving around them, to the other end of the spectrum, which is the belief that the purpose of education is to prepare indigenous students to be successful in the White world. "To free minds and liberate thinking in educational institutions to obtain true identity requires the continual revitalization of languages, ceremonies, and movement toward self-knowledge" (Gurneau, 2002, p. 23).

The mixed feelings on the importance of culture-based education could be attributed to a feeling of being closed in as Eagleton (2004) cautioned that to some people culture is cherished and to others it is claustrophobic. Respondents were evenly divided on whether or not Dakota culture courses should be required or an option for students to take. There were also mixed feelings on whether or not Dakota culture aspects should be added to general education courses. Instructors said they attempted to add Dakota culture-based options to some activities in all the courses that they teach, but they recognized that it was easier in some courses than in others. Nevertheless, despite mixed feelings on the degree of culture that should be added or required in the educational experience at Life Circle Tribal College, students and staff supported

culture-based education for those who desired or needed it. They appeared to be like a family to the extent that they had different views on the importance of cultural preservation in the college and the community, and different views on whether or not knowledge of the Dakota culture would benefit them individually; but they supported each other in their differences.

Even though about half of the interviewees felt that it was not particularly beneficial for them to have knowledge of their culture, they wanted to see the cultural mission of the college preserved for the people who valued learning about it. Many would like to see additional culture-based courses taught at Life Circle Tribal College such as dance outfit and moccasin making, traditional plants, and tribal government. Other areas of interest were art, history, literature, music, and traditional parenting. Survey respondents chose Dakota culture, language, and history as the areas they thought were most important to preserve.

It is likely that many of the students and staff that participated in the interviews and the surveys interpreted culture-based education as the opportunity to take courses such as beading, quilting, or moccasin making or as the

requirement to take Dakota culture or language for graduation. It is also likely that respondents that said they did not value the culture-based instruction did not realize how much they appreciated the submerged culture that they referred to when they said they felt comfortable and safe at the tribal college or when they said they enjoyed attending the wacipis and other gatherings. The submerged culture may consist of several things such as the way staff, faculty, and other students react to each other with respect, the inclusion of traditional rituals at gatherings and ceremonies with the community, the student body that is 90 percent American Indians from their community or families, and the visible American Indian décor of the college and its surroundings. A community person stated,

I think the "traditional" cultures are dying out as we go along. It [traditional culture] is not going to be anymore. The culture is here though. It will always be here.

This community person may have been speaking of the submerged culture that exists as the essence of a group without people realizing it.

In response to an open-ended question on culture in the curriculum, all respondents except one agreed that culture was an important part of the curriculum. These

results are similar to those of Boyer (1997) when he surveyed 1,600 tribal college students and found that students surveyed said they felt comfortable at their tribal college because it reflected the values of American Indians and because the college had taught them about the history and culture of their reservation and tribe.

Student and Staff perceptions on the impact of culture in the community. It not only takes a village to raise a child, it takes a village to create a college like this. The apparent support and loyalty of Life Circle Tribal College to the community appeared to exist in its every aspect; and that same loyalty and support was returned from the community. Life Circle Tribal College (2005) stated in its mission, "As a tribal college we emphasize the teaching and learning of Dakota culture and language toward the preservation of the tribe" (p. 60). The tribe is the community and interview and survey results of students and staff at Life Circle Tribal College suggested a loyalty to the community. Boyer (1997) also felt that Indians are now exerting more control over their own communities with the development of tribal colleges that are founded and governed by Indians. He said they are, "changing lives and offering real hope for the future" (p. 1). Modica (2003)

also said that tribal colleges with their curriculums adapted to reflect the values, intelligence, and traditions of Indian people, promote a safe learning environment and develop a culture of learning and respect that appears to have an impact on the Indian communities and their surrounding communities.

The desire to return to help the home community after obtaining advanced education was declared by almost all respondents and they felt that increased cultural knowledge would benefit the reservation community by having its members want to come back to work on the reservation to improve it after obtaining university degrees. They felt that having knowledge of one's culture would help them to be more capable of improving things because they understood the problems.

American Indian College Fund (AICF) (2006, p. 32) stated that, "After attending a tribal college, nearly 80 percent of American Indians take jobs to help their cultural communities." They quoted a student from the Flathead Reservation as saying, "If I stay on the Rez, I can use my education to help my people" (p. 32). In spite of the perceived needs of the reservation for educated employees and leaders, many were aware the reservation

needs to have more economic development in order to make more jobs available to those that return.

The preservation of culture in the community of Life Circle Tribal College included the preservation of the Dakota language. Ron His Horse is Thunder stated that language is paramount in holding onto a culture (Yellowbird, 2007). Netelle and Romaine (2000) also stated that the death of language results in the death of the culture. Many of the students interviewed expressed concern that the Dakota language would die with the elders in only a few decades.

The importance of preserving the Dakota language that was revealed in interviews ranged from feeling it was unnecessary because it would be seldom that you would need to use a Dakota word for anything in future work situations, to the desire to know more words and tap into the Dakota language knowledge of their elders in order to preserve it before it died out. Most of the students and staff knew only a few words in the Dakota language, but a majority of them would like to, at least, learn its basics and have it taught to their children. As DeLarios (2003) pointed out, it was likely that the lack of time to learn two languages was a major factor in any community. A busy

mother and staff person said, "It would take the time of learning two words rather than one."

Even though 96 percent of the respondents on the survey felt that it was necessary to preserve the Dakota language in order to preserve the culture, only 63 percent suggested that they would like to learn the Dakota language fluently. Twenty-nine percent seemed satisfied with learning no more than just a few words themselves, but 67 percent would like to see Dakota language fluency as an option for others, including their children. Nettle and Romaine (2000) explain that many people stop speaking their languages out of self-defense as a survival strategy.

"Language death occurs as a response to pressures of various types—social, cultural, economic, and even military—on a community" (Nettle & Romaine, 2000, p. 7). Nettle and Romaine (2000) suggest that often languages depend on parents transmitting them to the younger generations in their homes.

Language preservation is implicitly part of the mission of Life Circle Tribal College. Linguists have concluded that without the preservation of language, the surviving "culture" is a mere collection of artifacts. This is not to say that the language would not go through a natural

evolution, but rather, the extinguishing of the language is an indication of cultural change. The present research was consistent with DeLarios (2003) which showed an interest, from people of the reservation she studied, in learning Dakota more fluently. Dakota language is currently also being offered at the elementary and secondary school on the reservation where Life Circle Tribal College is located.

Neil McKay, a Dakota language specialist at the University of Minnesota, said American Indian people ought to,

Cherish the elders, and cherish the ones with the language and knowledge. You can't see the world through the eyes of your people unless you know the language (Cultural gathering, 2006).

Student and staff perceptions of the impact of culture outside the reservation. For the most part, the students and staff interviewed and surveyed indicated a belief that success in mainstream institutions, acceptance of diversity, and relationships off the reservation were just as dependent upon the individual as culture knowledge. Brown (2003) said that attending a tribal college is a necessary step, before entering a mainstream institution, for many American Indian students to achieve their academic goals. Brown (2003) suggested that the transfer students she surveyed from tribal colleges felt that the tribal

college had increased their readiness to attend a four-year university and they would recommend to friends and family to attend a tribal college before transferring to a four-year institution. In a similar survey Boyer (1997) found that 92 percent of the tribal college graduates surveyed felt that the tribal college prepared them adequately or better for advanced study. On the other hand, Demmert's (2001) results were mixed regarding the role of Native traditionalism on success at mainstream institutions at the postsecondary level. Swisher (1994) determined that out of 154 survey respondents 57 percent of American Indians surveyed believed that cultural values affected the ways in which American Indian students are more comfortable in demonstrating what they have learned. Kerbo's (1981) studies indicated that success in mainstream institutions was often related to the confidence obtained from a feeling of fitting in and being equal. On the other hand a study done by Huffman et al. (1986) suggested that success in college for American Indian students seemed to be related to confidence from a strong sense of personal and cultural identity and retention of traditional cultural heritage ($r=.33$).

Approximately half the students and staff interviewed and approximately 83 percent of those surveyed at Life Circle Tribal College felt that the increased self esteem that comes from knowing oneself and one's heritage can be beneficial in acceptance of diverse cultures outside the reservation. Others again felt that acceptance of diversity is dependent upon the individual.

Another area that demonstrated the importance of relationships with people from outside the reservation was the hospitality that personnel of Life Circle Tribal College showed guests. It is likely that outsiders that had the opportunity to share a meal or ceremony with this group of people were welcomed with hospitality and warmth that included food, entertainment, good company, and gifts.

Relationships played a very important part in the lives of the American Indians who attended Life Circle Tribal College--relationships in the areas of family, community, and neighboring communities. It was apparent that through this college, American Indians were given the opportunity to grow in education, self worth, and relationships with other people.

The harmony, respect, hospitality, and caring at Life Circle Tribal College were living examples of the concept

of "Wodakota" taken from the 2005 self study report of Life Circle Tribal College.

The word "Dakota" means friend or ally and comes from the word "wodakota," which means to be in harmony or balance. The circle of life is represented by the four stages of life—infant, youth, adult, elder. At the center of the circle is the individual, then the family, and outermost is the tribe or community. The individual always strives to find harmony or to maintain balance in his/her life (Life Circle Tribal College, 2005, p. 57-58).

The Dakota way of thinking is based upon the circle which represents "Mitakuye Owasin" or "all my relations" and is symbolic of the interconnectedness of living and life—the harmony and balance of the Dakota people (Life Circle Tribal College, 2005). Life Circle Tribal College,

Operates within the context of Dakota culture and, through the power of learning, strives to maintain the Dakota circle. Higher education and culture combine to strengthen the ability of students to flourish in the still larger, multicultural world (Life Circle Tribal College, 2005, p. 58).

Implications

Herandez (2006) quoted an American Indian tribal college student,

Being enrolled at a small, intimate tribal college located on your reservation where "everyone knows your business" can have its benefits. The majority of the instructors here know how it is (p. 14).

Another individual was quoted by Herandez (2006), "We are so small that we function as a family. We know each other;

we know each other's business so we can accommodate students" (Herandez, 2006, p. 14).

Many of the American Indians who attended or worked at Life Circle Tribal College appeared to learn and live their heritage; one might infer that they were proud of who they were. This should also help them look and work toward the future to improve themselves and their people. As a result, it is likely that the college experience and quality of life may be improved not only for the students, but also for the community. Relationships, everyday experiences and respect for others were as much a part of the higher education experience as the more traditional American college curriculum.

The cultural mission of Life Circle Tribal College appeared to be well fulfilled and appreciated by a majority of students and staff. The students and staff that did not perceive cultural knowledge as an important element in their own lives wanted the cultural opportunity to remain for others that desired it. Students and staff also appeared to be very satisfied with Life Circle Tribal College and had some suggestions for course offerings and requirements (or non-requirements) that could impact future curriculum. Life Circle Tribal College seemed to attempt,

with its dual mission, to preserve the Dakota language and customs of the community. The faculty and staff seemed to present (in a positive way) the history, traditions, values, and lifestyles of the Dakota people.

At Life Circle Tribal College, community ties and the desire to return to the community to work and make a difference were strong. Preservation of the Dakota language will be a challenge. In spite of the statistics that suggested students and staff favored increased use and knowledge of the Dakota language, many perceive that a lack of time and convenience could make it much more difficult to learn the Dakota language well than to have the desire to learn it.

The ability of American Indians to successfully attend mainstream educational institutions and relate to persons off the reservation were important goals of staff and students at Life Circle Tribal College, but relationships off the reservation may depend mostly on the individual. It was also suggested that students and staff of Life Circle Tribal College would like to have other cultures attempt to understand the Dakota culture better.

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Cheryl Crazy Bull, President, AIHEC (2006) described tribally-controlled higher education institutions as

"institutions that honor and revitalize tribal knowledge while leading tribal people into the future through education" (p.1). This study indicated that the culture-based approach to education that is claimed to be used at Life Circle Tribal College appears to successfully provide affordable and accessible higher education to students in tribal communities and prepares them for future employment or additional education on the reservation or in the multicultural world. In addition, this culture-based approach to education provides partial solutions for preserving tribal culture and language in the community and hope for improvement in the future of the community.

Recommendations

It might be true that to prevent the culture from eventually disappearing completely, some cultural courses such as Dakota culture should continue to be mandated at Life Circle Tribal College. Other cultural courses such as Indian beading, history, dance, quilting, moccasin making, sewing, and art ought to continue for the students that desire them. Time constraints of the students may make it difficult for many of them to take advantage of the opportunities to learn sewing, moccasin making, and other

courses that survey respondents listed most often for courses they would like to take.

The language preservation program and the Dakota language courses and activities offered at Life Circle Tribal College should also continue. Time constraints may also preclude learning the Dakota language, but the desire to keep the Dakota language alive and to learn it may be essential to maintaining the Dakota culture. The Dakota language is spoken by many more people than is Lakota, so it would make sense that since the nearby University of North Dakota offers courses in the Lakota language, they would also offer courses in the Dakota language. There is some discrepancy in the numbers of speakers, Estes (1999) lists 20,355 Dakota speakers and 6,000 Lakota speakers; Ager (1998) lists 15,355 Dakota speakers and 6,000 Lakota speakers.

The logical recommendation is for Life Circle Tribal College to continue to be embedded in the community and the community embedded in the college. The culture of these Dakota people may change, as all cultures do. The college might stay more relevant if it continues to reflect those changes rather than attempting to reflect a culture of several generations ago. This is not to say that informing

students of their cultural past is not important; rather, being informed on their cultural past presumably also informs them on the change process. The most important parts of the Dakota culture such as the value system with its great respect for one another, its attitude of humility, the importance it places on a balanced life and relationships, and its courage to constantly strive toward a better future through education will remain even if they forget how to say certain phrases in the Dakota language.

Ideas for Future Studies

Future study idea one--What are the characteristics of the submerged culture? It is possible that the greatest percentage of survey respondents perceived the fulfillment of the culture mission as offering courses in beading and language, because that is the most visible. The Dakota culture embedded into every aspect of the college is often hidden, but nevertheless very strong. The interviewees that spoke of the college as being familiar and what they are "used to" or spoke of the reservation as being a "safe" place to raise children may have expressed a comfort in this submerged culture. In this busy world where many people do not know their neighbors, it would be interesting to study the unique, but often not mentioned,

characteristics of the people on this reservation that make it such a comfortable, safe, and supportive place for the people who live there.

Future study idea two--Do graduates have any useful ideas for the tribal college? The loyalty that seemed to exist in this college to the Dakota culture and also person to person was notable. It would be interesting to study graduates, who are not a part of the college as current staff or students, to see how they perceive the cultural mission as having been fulfilled at the college for them in their present lives and also their visions for their former college.

Future study idea three--Would a comparative study of students beginning their postsecondary education and students that have completed their postsecondary education reveal a difference in attitudes toward the need for the culture-based approach to education used at tribal colleges? Does the additional confidence gained from successful educational completion decrease their perception for the need for an educational approach that is culturally-based?

Conclusion

This study attempted to answer the questions of how did students and staff at Life Circle Tribal College perceive Life Circle Tribal College as fulfilling the cultural portion of its mission and what impact did students and staff feel the culture-based education approach used there had on students' lives in their educational pursuits at the tribal college, in their current and future relationships in the community in which they live, and in their future education and relationships in mainstream colleges and communities outside the reservation?

The mission statement of Life Circle Tribal College declares the following:

The mission is to provide higher education opportunities, at the community college, including vocational and technical training. As a tribal college we emphasize the teaching and learning of Dakota culture and language toward the preservation of the Tribe. The goal is student self-sufficiency and independence through academic achievement (<http://www.collegefund.org/>, 2007).

Qualitative and quantitative data from this study suggested that the participants in the study felt that Life Circle Tribal College fulfilled its cultural mission both by providing opportunities to learn about the Dakota culture and language and also by providing staff and faculty that

understood the uniqueness of the American Indian students. Respondents were divided on whether or not they believed that preserving, teaching, and understanding the Dakota culture, history, value system, and language were important to student success at this tribal college. Nevertheless, they wanted the opportunity to be made available for those that desired to learn about their culture.

The greatest amount of consensus in the study was in the area of the impact that the cultural focus of Life Circle Tribal College had on the community. Most felt that the cultural focus of Life Circle Tribal College was important as the key for community improvement by having educated citizens return to the community to work and lead. The preservation of the Dakota language in the community was also thought to be important, but the extent of immersion that was desired was difficult to assess.

Many respondents also felt that knowledge of one's culture would be helpful in establishing an individual's identity and felt that it might aid in producing successful relationships with the multicultural world outside the reservation. Others felt that relationships with the world outside the reservation were mostly dependent on each individual.

American Indians appear to want to create equal learning opportunities for their people, direct them to work for community good, and enable them to participate successfully in the multicultural world. They also indicate that they desire to pass on their cultural legacy to future generations (Gurneau, 2002).

Life Circle Tribal College appears to provide affordable and accessible postsecondary education to students in this Dakota community and it appears to prepare these students for employment or additional education on the reservation or in the multicultural world. In addition, the culture-based approach to education provides partial solutions for preserving tribal culture and language in the community and hope for improvement in the future of the community.

APPENDIX A

A Spirit Lake Nation Prayer

Grandfather, Great Spirit, you have been always, and before you nothing has been. There is not one to pray to but you. The star nations all over the heavens are yours, and yours are the grasses of the earth. You are older than all need, older than all pain and prayer.

Grandfather, Great Spirit,... look upon your children... The Spirit Lake Oyate, that they may face the winds and walk the good road to the day of quiet.

Grandfather, Great Spirit, fill us with the light. Give us with the light. Give us the strength to understand and eyes to see. Teach us to walk, the soft earth, as relatives, to all that live.

Help us, for without you we are nothing

(Anonymous, Spirit Lake Nation, 2007).

APPENDIX B

FIELD NOTES

Event: Employee Luncheon
Participant/Observer: LoAnn Nelson
Participants: Employees
Date: January 26, 2006 12:00-1:00
Place: LCTC

On January 26, 2006, I attended the monthly employee luncheon at Life Circle Tribal College. The day was mild and the college was fresh and clean. Tables were lined up in the old gymnasium with the painted window blocks. The lunch consisted of mashed potatoes, sliced beef roast, corn, cabbage slaw, macaroni salad, buns, and bars. It was catered by a local restaurant. The luncheon was served as a buffet and employees filled their plates and sat in mixed groups around the many tables--American Indian, white, and others. For many, it is usually difficult to determine if they were Indian, white or white and Indian mixed. The groups were formed more by age or work area than by ethnic background.

The monthly luncheon is one of the many ways that the administration attempts to reveal to employees how valuable and appreciated they are. The employees were dressed very casually and it was a friendly, informal, and warm atmosphere. Stiff formality would have been very out of place in this group. Shortly before the luncheon, all employees were drug tested. That included me. I had no knowledge that it would be a part of the day and I am not sure if the others knew or not. The employee group I chose to eat with consisted of four ladies. Three of them appeared to be American Indian and around sixty years of age. The other appeared to be white and several years younger. We visited about craft and rummage sale events. Both activities have created a connection between one of the other ladies and me for several years. The lady that appeared the oldest had eleven children. She knew me, but I didn't know her. I had known of several of her children. I believe almost everyone at the luncheon easily knew my

name, but I knew very few names. I felt completely welcome.

FIELD NOTES

Event: Graduation
Participant/Observer: LoAnn Nelson
Other Participants: The reservation community members
Dates of Event: May 2006
Location of Event: LCTC

Each spring, the graduation ceremony at LCTC displays an array of Dakota culture—beautiful star quilts given as gifts, drums and singers performing throughout the ceremony, prayers spoken by an elder in Dakota language first and repeated in English, and speakers that address how the challenges of the reservation can be overcome with education.

A crowd of family and friends cheered each graduate as they prepared to enter the workforce or transfer to another college. The assurance that they were supported and commended in their educational endeavors by the entire reservation was unmistakable. The old gymnasium with the painted window blocks was filled with excitement and contained a large number of very small children that accompanied their parent or parents. The doors were open to the outdoors to keep the crowded room cool. Children and adults wandered out and in. The dress code was very informal and warmth, fun, and excitement filled the air.

Bright silver and red decorations added luster to the red graduation gowns. After the ceremony, a line was formed and lunch was served. The lunch consisted of mashed potatoes, meat, corn, gravy, salads, and a beautifully decorated graduation cake. Laughter and talking filled the air as the reservation community gathered around tables to eat together. Distinguished white guests from mainstream universities or distinguished American Indian who hold prestigious positions in national American Indian educational groups were proudly introduced and given a tour of the beautiful, newly remodeled building.

FIELD NOTES

Event: Tipi Raising
Participant/Observer: LoAnn Nelson
Other Participants: Employees and students
Dates of Event: July 2006
Location of Event: LCTC

I stopped in LCTC one beautiful summer day in July. All students and employees were on their way out to the front lawn where an elder was going to raise a tipi. The tipi came in a box, but was beautifully painted and placed in a circle with long poles attached and ready to be lifted. The elder spoke of tradition and the division of duties of men and women in the days when the tipi was used as a home. The tipi adorned the front landscape of the college most of the summer. It became a fairly lengthy process so many employees felt they needed to return to their jobs before it was completed.



FIELD NOTES

Event: Welcome to the NCA
Accreditation
Team
Participant/Observer: LoAnn Nelson
Other Participants: Employees and community
members
Dates of Event: November 2005
Location of Event: LCTC

The NCA team that came to LCTC was greeted with trepidation and warmth. The community and the college gave their sincere best to them. A program consisted of: a welcome from the college president, Dakota language prayers given by a local elder and repeated in English, performances by local Native drummers and singers, speakers from the community, and introductions of distinguished guests from universities that were known to love and support the college. The ceremony ended with a traditional feed that included Indian fry bread, juneberry pudding, and tripe soup.

The informal lunch, conversation, and laughter were shared as the community was just being its warm and wonderful self. After spending three days in the community, ten years of accreditation was the suggestion of the team. It was later awarded. The goodbyes to the NCA team consisted of another ceremony that involved the community and gifts to them of jackets, handmade star quilts, and the gift of a memory of the wonderful warm community which places extreme value on education. The NCA team will most likely not forget the experience.

FIELD NOTES

Event: Walk through
Participant/Observer: LoAnn Nelson
Other Participants: Employees & students
Dates of Event: A typical Wednesday afternoon
Location of Event: LCTC

As you drive up to LCTC late in an afternoon, the beautiful rock garden, the new log cabin, the Calvary Square historical site, and the sprawling college give you a sense of being in a very unique place.



As you walk through the door, you will see a beautiful star quilt hanging to your right and a glass cabinet filled with Indian bead work and artifacts to your left. Straight ahead is a happy holiday scene created with bales of straw that changes from scarecrows and pumpkins in the fall to a nativity scene in December and an Easter scene in the spring. Deep two-color earth tone walls compliment carpeting of the same hues and the amazing Indian paintings done by local artists on the walls.

As you walk to the classrooms, a branch hall to the right gives access to the new science wing that contains an up-to-date science lab and classrooms that are equipped with mounted video displays. A few steps to another level bring you to the student lounge. A part of it is filled with computers and tables for study and the other section contains soft comfortable furniture made for sharing thoughts and ideas or for taking a break with friends to visit or watch television.

Farther down the hall are up-to-date computer labs equipped with wireless instructor stations for video display. Students and instructors are almost always found working on assignments, writing e-mails, or researching an assigned topic. The instructors are usually found sitting side-by-side, one-on-one with a student while working on an assignment.

In one computer lab, you can find computers torn apart in the back of the room. These are home computers that have been brought in by students because they need repair. The hardware instructor has the students repair their own under supervision regardless of the complexity of the problem.



The president's and other staff offices, the day care, and the old gymnasium are located in the hall to the right and the students' classrooms, instructors' offices, and the library are located in the hall to the left. As you turn to the right, a large party perk of coffee and Styrofoam cups make a cozy, warm cup of coffee available to anyone that walks by.

FIELD NOTES

Event: A Birthday
Participant/Observer: LoAnn Nelson
Other Participants: Employees that attended
employee luncheon
Dates of Event: January 31, 2006 12:00-1:00
Location of Event: LCTC

Groups of employees and a few students that had walked through the pot luck table and filled their plates now sat in cozy groups at the tables visiting. The long tables and metal chairs were again set in rows, but the people around them didn't need to have tables in a circle to encourage discussion or closeness.

The pot luck brought a wonderful variety of ethnic food that wasn't available at the catered employee luncheon. The president of the college stood behind the table preparing barbecue buns for everyone as they walked through. She had also purchased and brought the decorated birthday cake. It even had a little computer on the top. The Styrofoam cups and plates and plastic silverware seem to bring more comfortable and warm group feelings than fine china often does.

The birthday lady is around 60 years old and has worked as the assistant to the president at this tribal college for several years. She has seen several presidents come and go. She was treasured by each of them, but this president makes it a point to let employees know how much they are valued. Some of the employees brought birthday gifts for Bernice and others just came. Everyone sang Happy Birthday and clapped for the cute sayings and readings that the president had prepared. Soft background music was added to the engaging conversations.

When the hour ended, all employees and students went back to teaching or to their desks with a smile.

An e-mail was quickly sent by Bernice with the simple phrase, "I just want to thank everyone for the delicious lunch! Good food, good people make this day special. Thank You! Bernice"

FIELD NOTES

Event: Employee Appreciation Dinner
Participant/Observer: LoAnn Nelson
Other Participants: Employees and their guests
that attended the dinner
Dates of Event: December 2005 6:00-
Location of Event: Dinner club

The employees of LCTC were invited to attend a very special sit down dinner at the most expensive dining place in the nearby town and to invite a guest. The funds for this event came from a pool in which employees had paid in to get an advance payroll check. The pool had just gathered money for many years.

After the dinner, the president of the tribal college presented all employees with a framed certificate of appreciation and a check. I received \$75 and I only teach one night each week, so I assume others received a proportionate share more. We all felt very valued.

The evening was perfect. The food was wonderful and the warm visiting and laughing seemed as if it would never end. Many were dressed in something new and special for the evening, but it was easy to see that dress was not all that important. There was also entertainment. A beautiful Indian girl that had been Miss South Dakota of 2002, gave a stand up comedy act. She helped everyone to laugh not only at her jokes, but also to see humor in many situations on the reservation that might otherwise have not been funny.

As each person left to return home for the evening, they felt they had been given much more than the certificate and the check that they carried in their hands.

FIELD NOTES

Event: Dakota Cultural Gathering
Participant/Observer: LoAnn Nelson
Other Participants: American Indians from the community and from the college
Dates of Event: March 31-April 1, 2006
Location of Event: LCTC

I received an invitation to the Dakota Gathering at the tribal college. It was an initiation event for the development of a Cultural Learning Center. Speakers came from other community colleges in Minnesota, South Dakota, and Nebraska. The speakers were mostly Dakota and Lakota language instructors. I missed most of the first day. Traditional Indian meals such as Indian tacos, soup, fry bread, and junberry pudding were enjoyed together each day. The All Nations Drummers played songs throughout the gathering. Veterans and elders were honored with blankets and songs.

A recap of the speakers:

President of the tribal college:

The president of this tribal college has been a pipe carrier and sun dancer and has been a part of the ceremonial and pow wow circuit. During the prayers of honor to veterans, she walked to the back and joined the All Nations Singers.

She said, "I am blessed to come home in the capacity as president of this tribal Community College. It has been challenging. My main focus is to treat people well and recognize the good in people. The grandfather takes me to the places I am supposed to be. I have come to realize that everything must be rooted in culture. We will not try to fit culture into the curriculum, but fit the curriculum into culture. Eating and sharing food is a part of developing relationships and the connection of why we are together and why we should be good to each other. The ultimate good that we can do as a college is to bring hearts and minds together. I believe in the Dakota ways and I try to live them to the best of my ability. I make mistakes, but I try to make my ancestors proud. It is about our grandchildren coming to This tribal college in the future and learning about the culture."

Oliver Gourd:

"We need to be two people—one to learn the wishetshi way and one to learn the Dakota way."

Rick:

Master of Ceremony "Wiping of Tears" said, "Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves and hung the Indians. We need to not only have an interest in economic development but also in human development. People have four areas they need to keep in balance or they create a void—mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual."

Glen Wasicuna—Shakopee, MN: Dakota language teacher—"Teach people to not only greet each other, but to also ask how are you in Dakota. This asks have you taken care of yourself. Have you done what you are supposed to do? have you fulfilled your obligations as a man or a woman? This shows concern about the person."

"Have a history component in your language classes. They go hand in hand. You cannot teach one without the other. Teach the history with love and understanding. Language and culture go hand in hand. We don't want a nation of one word people."

"Get your accent from learning the Dakota alphabet. If you learn the alphabet, you can say, read, and write anything in Dakota."

Neil McKay: Speaks only in Dakota to his children that are five and seven even if one has red hair and blue eyes. "Cherish the elder; cherish the ones with the language and knowledge. Don't talk down to your children. Children need to learn the history. You can't see the world through the eyes of your people unless you know the language."

"The fact is that raising a child with more than one language benefits them and enhances their cognitive ability. (Statistics do indicate this.)"

Luther Standing Bear said that in boarding schools, the ones that had a background in their native tongue did better in English than the others.

Immersion is raising children in Dakota language rather than it just being a class that they go to.

Stephanie Charging-Eagle: Lakota woman and language educator. "You can translate words, but it is often difficult to translate feelings." She cried and afterwards the Master of Ceremonies, Rick, thanked her for her "tears for our people."

APPENDIX C

Interview With President of LCTC

Interviewer: What value do you place on the cultural preservation and the instruction of culture in the tribal college curriculum?

President of LCTC: This college 's a tribal college. And as such, our primary purpose is the advocacy, the preservation, and the teaching and learning of culture and language. The preservation of culture is intrinsically linked to the survival of tribal governments and tribal communities. We were founded based on that premise and our charter directs us to fulfill that purpose--which is again preservation of culture and language.

Interviewer: How do you feel this tribal college fulfills the higher education portion of its mission? I understand that full NCA accreditation was just achieved and there is a strong focus on quality education.

President of LCTC: We are a tribal college, number one, and people have to understand that tribal colleges are very distinct, different entities than anything else--not only as higher education institutions but as a tribal nations. We have a different relationship with this county and we have a lot of issues to deal with. From my perspective, higher education is the key, relative to addressing these issues.

Now, being involved in that, as a primary key, and in being that bridge to addressing our issues out here in Indian country, tribal colleges have this unique charge to serve and provide higher education opportunities for our community, our students and our constituencies. There is some controversy relative to culture integration--Segmenting it out or integrating it in. From my perspective (I am a fairly very new president but an enrolled member of the Spirit Lake Dakota tribe); culture is the root of our resilience and how and why we survive.

Yes, culture is fragmented because it is contemporized today, at least from my perspective, relative to what I understand about being a traditionalist and from what I understand about being a Dakota woman; but it is so very important to us succeeding. It is important to have a good foundation and a good identity relative to being. We are Indian people, we are indigenous, we are Dakota, and we are part of this bigger thing; but we have to be rooted in that foundation. From my perspective, our primary job is the teaching and the preservation of Dakota culture and Dakota language.

The next challenge is finding how we integrate that in. I have bigger aspirations than just having a Dakota language class and Dakota culture. That is not what I am talking about. We think and see the world differently, we understand differently, and we learn differently. That has to do with being Native and with being indigenous. It is a very different because we are holistic in our thinking, we are very family orientated, and we are really attune to relationships, oral story telling, and oral traditions. We are very visual. We like to meet and to talk. We learn and think differently, so culture in a tribal college is not just having a course or even an Indian studies department or program; it is how we conduct business, how we function, and how our policies are developed and implemented.

Interviewer: I understand, if everyone doesn't take beading or language class it doesn't mean that they have no knowledge of the culture. The values of the culture are more than the beading or language.

President of LCTC: Yes

Interviewer: Do you feel that cultural specific activities should be integrated into all classes including general education courses (such as Dakota words for scientific names, drums used in math to illustrate cylinders, Indian literature in English etc)?

I am not sure I agree or that I can answer the question because cultural activities implies lots of different things for us in relation to all the changes we are doing at this tribal college--especially changes in the last couple of years and what we had to go through for this accreditation status of the institution. We are

encouraging this concept or idea of cultural integration, but again, I interpret that very differently. For example, if we are teaching Algebra, it is not so much saying terms in Dakota; it is the teaching style. It is important that the instructor understands that they have Native students in the class. If it is not a Native teacher, it is important that they understand that our students learn differently, think differently, and see the world differently. How do you build lesson plans and how do you build the syllabus to accommodate that? Again, it is not just saying a few words in Dakota that have math meaning; it is, from my perspective, about teaching that class so it accommodates how our students think, see, and learn, and then building in different activities. The activities may be using Dakota language or may be using specific activities; but again it is more about the learning techniques or the teaching techniques such as using visuals, diagrams, and pictures rather than just the lecture type classroom that is typical to higher education learning.

Interviewer: OK, I see that you definitely want more than just using a drum, Native terms, and stories in the classroom.

President of LCTC: Yes

Interviewer: Do you feel that this culture-based approach to teaching and learning benefits students as they move into mainstream institutions? Does it give them a sense of self identity or self esteem as they move into a university setting or transfer into a non reservation setting?

This tribal college is a two year tribal community college and again culture, the appreciation of culture, and the teaching and the preservation of culture is intrinsically linked to our programs, our courses, and all that we are. We will continue to try to enhance and improve the aspect of what we do at a two year institution. At the same time, our ultimate goal is the pursuit of the bachelor degrees, the master's degrees, the PhDs, the doctors, the JDs, and whatever. That is the other side--the career and professional goals so we have our people being educated.

Personally, I really believe our survivability, our resilience, and our strength comes from culture. That means

we really have to understand that it is not just about putting on beads and feathers and attending pow-wows. That is an important and wonderful part of our culture, but it is more than that. It is getting to know our history and our leaders. It is really rooted in language, which is another dynamic of it. It is more about the value systems and the relationships and bringing that in. So, as a two year college, I feel that we do strengthen the individual student by having culture as an important aspect of our curriculum and our program. I believe knowledge of one's culture does give one the strength in identity to go off the reservation to the non Indian institutions.

Maybe someday we will look to becoming a four year institution--hopefully that will be a goal for us, but at the moment, right now and in the immediate future, I want to be the best two year tribal college we can be. I want to continue to build and strengthen the bridges with our sister institutions across the state and in the region. I want to make sure we graduate students that have those skills to make that transition, help them in that transition, do some things to attract and support them; because ultimately, they are going to come back here.

Interviewer: What are some of the major challenges that you see in the future for This tribal college?

President of LCTC: One of our goals in our strategic plan is to double our enrollment. We have been averaging about 200 students enrolled in the institution for the last three or four years, which is good. The better data displays that we have maintained the enrollment (the headcount) but students are taking more courses and more credit hours. They are also declaring majors, which is a significant improvement over the last couple of years. The bottom line is that it also helps with our funding sources.

Many of the challenges that we face as a tribal college are really reflective of the challenges of being Indian and living on the reservation. It is so linked into health status, economics, lack of jobs on the reservation, being rural, being in geographically isolated communities, lack of education and educational opportunities, and social dysfunction stemming from oppressive policies and reservation lifestyle. Most of our programs on the reservation are federally funded and at the whim of

congressional appropriations. It is complicated and convoluted. It is hard to understand being Indian and there are misconceptions. Some people think if you are Indian, the Feds take care of you. That is not true; it is so not true. There are so many stereotypes about our people. It is important that others understand the oppressive policies that led to the reservation lifestyle.

The understanding of the reservation lifestyle is rooted in the history. Most people don't understand the history, including our own people, and so one of our challenges is really teaching that history, in a good way, but teaching it from our side, from our perspective of how and what happened to our people. We need to teach why we live the way we do, why the treaties were not fulfilled and how the government implements policies and legislation in a piecemeal fractionated fashion. The policies have never been fully funded. They are typically funded at about 60-65 percent of the need for healthcare and education. So the disparity gap grows.

This entire situation presents a challenge when we are trying to recruit students. We also still have a significant dropout problem in the high schools on the reservation. Again, this is all tied to the social economics and dynamics of the community in which we are trying to recruit. Our average age of students here at the college is 27. It is primarily female, about 67 percent, and they are primarily single parents. We are trying to look at the lack of male students. The questions of why don't we have more male students and what can we do to recruit more male students are intrinsically linked to the dynamics of the community.

We go out of our way to work with the dynamics of the community which is rooted in culture. The concepts of sharing, giving, and working together are really culturally based. They are linked back to the values and other issues. We have funding issues, economic issues, education and health issues. They are all tied together. If we can do a better job of working and supporting our students to be good students, it will ultimately help them to be the contributor back to the community. It is always about relationships and how they link back and forth. We need to teach students self responsibility and the skills to be self responsible--coming to class and doing their homework.

As the students gain self responsibility they will be learning and growing individually. That is again rooted in the Dakota ways, Dakota beliefs and value systems, and also the inner-strength that the community brings to the college.

Interviewer: The community here seems to have so much confidence in the college.

President of LCTC: Dakota means friend or ally and it comes from the word wodakota, which means to be at harmony and it is really personalized to be in harmony individually and understand the holist concept of self. This includes knowing our four quadrants and our relationship to fellow human beings, the outside world, our internal world here on the reservation and being a tribal member here and with other Indians. It is therefore linked and rooted in community.

As a tribal community, it is culturally based in that value system of sharing and working together. Yes, we have issues, we have barriers and gaps, and we don't always agree but; when it gets right down to it, the entire community really does believe that education is the gateway. Education serves many purposes and primarily we can learn more about ourselves and our own history. That can give us the strength of a culture base so we can go off the reservation and understand those outside worlds and cultures and how we are a part of this very diverse world and what our role is in this diverse world. We can also teach people about us--who we are, how we came to be here, our history, and our contributions to the world.

It is relational and is always about connections, but community is very important to us. We have a lot of members that live off the reservation but when we leave the reservation we always come home. I was an enrolled member as a youth and even though I lived in Minneapolis or Washington DC, I still maintained my ties and roots back here. At some point in time we always come back home, even if it is just in the summer for a pow wow, for family gatherings, or whatever. Many of us that grew up on the reservation try to come back to work on the reservation because do understand the issues and problems. We really do need to have professional people back here with the credentials to start building.

Interviewer: Thank you. You are a terrific leader.

President of LCTC: I am doing the best I can.

Interviewer's thoughts: It is evident that she is doing her best and her best is amazing.

APPENDIX D

Interview Transcripts

Interview #2

Interviewer: Do you think knowledge of the Dakota culture is important to the students and their success in this college, in mainstream colleges, and in future employment either on the reservation or off the reservation?

O: No, not really, I think it is important to have the cultural instruction here for people who want to learn it. I think it is fair because the opportunity is here. To be honest, I don't really know much about the culture and my grandma always told me not to pay attention to it. She raised me, and she always said just go to school and go to church and don't pay attention to the other traditional stuff. That's not going to help you as much as school.

Interviewer: Do you think understanding the things in the past helps students connect with themselves and others?

O: It might for those who are interested in that. I don't dwell on the past because it is not going to help me. To me, there is no sense in going back to that, just move forward. There are people who want to know, and it is fair to them to teach that and to have it here.

Interviewer: Well, could having knowledge of one's cultural background make students have more understanding of other cultures, like Negroes or Mexicans, whites?

O: Well sure, but I think it is the person themselves, if they want to know other kinds of people. There are others that could just care less.

Interviewer: Ok, Do you think that the amount of cultural courses out here should be increased or decreased or remain about the same? Do you have any ideas for courses that you would like to see offered?

O: I think that if they were to offer more, I would want to learn more about the tribal government and about what we could do to help the reservation now rather than the history.

I'd rather know how we can improve things now because we can't change the history, it is one thing to know it, but it is not going to help me. It would help to learn to make changes. Most people don't understand the procedures and they don't know where to go.

Interviewer: How about getting the community involved in the tribal college, how do you see that as being valuable here and some things that might be or could be done differently?

O: It would be valuable to be able to get the community more involved because right now it is hard. Everybody has families and everybody works. If we were able to get more of the community involved with the college, they would see how important education is.

Interviewer: You feel the activities with the community should be expanded so that more people would get acquainted with the college and possibly sign up for classes?

O: Yes, Right now it is just the students and some times they will bring a family member but we're not getting very many new students.

Interviewer: Do you think that it would be more relevant to students that come here if the instructors would incorporate Dakota words for science or Indian literature for English class or using a drum for a cylinder in math? Would it make a difference and help students think it was more relevant or do you think it would be just a waste of effort?

O: Again, it is depending on the student. Not everybody learns the same. To me it would be a waste of time because you spend more time if they don't know the word to begin with. It would take the time of learning two words rather than one. And when you have a job, how often are you going to have to say it in Dakota? I understand, it is nice to

know, for some, but to me, I just don't think that it is important.

Interviewer: Do you value the fact that the graduations and other ceremonies use the traditional rituals such as drums, Dakota prayers and things like that?

O: Yes, It makes it more personal and it is what we are used to. It would be different if we didn't have it. We have had it all the time. I remember in head start when we had it. It is just nice to have it.

Interviewer: Do you think that some understanding about the cultural heritage helps students come back home and work like you?

O: Yes, It's important to come back because you see the problems and you see what can be changed. That is important. It is not so much about understanding the heritage as it is working toward the future and understanding what's happening. That's what I see. I want to move forward. Who cares about what happened?

Interview #3

Interviewer: How do you feel about the value of the cultural portion of the mission statement in tribal colleges? Do you think it is important to the students and their success in this college, in mainstream colleges, and in future employment either on the reservation or off the reservation?

C: Yes, I feel it (cultural education) is valuable, especially for special students. I myself am not a traditional. I love watching Indians dance and I wish I could speak the language but my dad chose not to teach us this language. My older sister's first language was Sioux and when she started school, it was really hard on her. She couldn't learn English as easily, so my parents stopped right there and they wouldn't teach us two younger ones the Sioux language because it was messing us up.

Interviewer: Do you feel that besides offering courses in Dakota language, beading etc., that the tribal college tries to address the different types of learning styles of American Indian students. Do you feel that your learning style is different from other ethnic races or ethnic origins, and if so, does the tribal college address that learning style?

C: I don't think mine is any different than anybody else's.

Interviewer: Do you feel that the community involvement is important in this tribal college, the pow-wows, and the game evenings? Why would those be important to a tribal college?

C: Well, they have their moccasin games and things like that. I think many students probably need it, but I have no interest in it. To get these kids to go to these things and do these things kind of generates an interest in it, and they may grow up and become traditional. What's more traditional than there is no lying and stealing, no abusing your body, and stuff, you always try to be good to other people and honest.

Interviewer: How important is it to the tribal college that they focus somewhat on the culture at the tribal college. Do you think that the people who have a cultural

background are more capable of serving in a tribal government setting or do you think it might not be necessary?

C: I think it's necessary to learn about their culture and the tribal government. It might not be necessary. I think if they had the education, they could lead us anyway.

Interviewer: Do you think that having a cultural background would encourage people to come back to the reservation to work after they have received advanced degrees? Would knowledge of one's heritage encourage people to return to the community to work?

C: It might. If they had the cultural background, they may want to return, but there are no jobs for them to return to. That's the whole problem, but culture might play a major part in wanting to return.

Interviewer: Do you think understanding one's own culture will enable that person to get along better and be more understanding about other cultures or enable them to be able to relate better in a multicultural world?

C: Yes, most definitely

Interviewer: Do you feel that knowledge of one's cultural background would help a person to be more successful in an employment position off the reservation or not make any difference?

C: No, I don't think it would make any difference. If people have education and learn what they are suppose to, it doesn't matter what race you are, you will do fine.

Interviewer: Does an understanding of the Dakota culture help you in your employment here on the reservation?

C: Yes, it does. I grew up off the reservation. It is easier to understand a lot of these people better if you know where they are coming from. It is really hard, when somebody comes to work here from a different reservation or grew up off the reservation. They come here and they don't seem to know where these kids are coming from. I know what is going on here and things like that, they don't understand.

Interviewer: Well, can you think of anything that you would like to see offered here culturally-specific?

C: I would like to learn to dance and how to make dance outfits and accessories.

Interviewer: I can't sew; but the dance sounds like fun. What are your intentions after you go to school here?

C: I've thought about it. I'm just going part-time right now and I need to get that two-year degree. I've wanted that two-year degree since I was in high school or a four-year degree since I was in high school. I got married right away after high school and I started having kids. I have five kids and now my youngest one is twenty. Now I have time to do this and I can afford it because I don't have to be buying for five kids. It's been fifteen years since I have gone to school.

Interviewer: After you obtain your two-year degree are you thinking about what area you would like to go into?

C: Accounting, but that's not what I wanted to be, I wanted to be a teacher.

Interviewer: Well, I am sure you would be good at either one.

Interview #4

Interviewer: How do you feel about the value of the cultural portion of the dual mission statement in tribal colleges?

T: To be perfectly honest, I don't look at it as a dual mission. From experience, I have found that students seem to want to just be treated as students rather than looked upon as Indian students. Teaching doesn't need to be done differently with American Indian students. Different learning styles are not unique to American Indians or any minority segment of the population, but go across all people and all races and need to be addressed in any educational setting. There is value in incorporating culture into the curriculum but not for the purpose of treating American Indian students any differently from any other students.

Reservations are sovereign entities and it seems that it would be a good idea to teach tribal law and tribal government to American Indian students and also teach them to understand how their education system works and how it is funded.

There is also value in teaching beading and Dakota language at this tribal college, but the culture cannot be taught in a classroom. Norwegians can eat lefse and American Indians can learn to bead, but culture is part of an inner being that can't be only taught. You can experience things relevant to a culture, but no one can teach you to be Norwegian or Indian. Your culture is the essence of which you are—your history and language.

Interviewer: Do you feel that American Indian students that have greater knowledge of their history and culture will have increased success in more advanced studies at Western-based, mainstream colleges and universities?

T: Success in more advanced studies will probably not be related to culture knowledge, but rather to the determination of the student.

Interviewer: Do you feel that American Indian students that have greater knowledge of their history and culture will

have increased ability to function successfully in a multicultural world?

T: American Indian students, like everyone else, will function successfully or not in a multicultural world depending on who they are and how they see themselves.

Interviewer: What are some things that you do to integrate culture into the courses you teach? Please also give any insight you have into how you perceive the unique learning styles of the Indian students.

T: We try to integrate culture into all parts of the curriculum. For example, the social sciences and language arts courses lend themselves to more obvious ways to give students a choice of activities that are unique to their culture. Students often have the choice of reading American Indian short stories in Literature and one student chose to give a presentation on successful American Indian women in business.

The learning styles of American Indians are not that unique compared to other students across the country. They deserve to be treated the same as you would treat any other ethnic group. The greatest disservice to American Indian students is to have low expectations of them because they are American Indians. In order for the college and the instructors to be accountable, the quality needs to be there. American Indian students like all other students can go by the old Army commercial that challenges everyone to "be all that you can be." It is important to have high expectations and demand responsible behavior from all students.

Interviewer: Do you feel that American Indian culture-based instruction is helpful for students to have a better understanding of other cultures and relate better outside the reservation?

T: Any time one knows oneself better as a person it is easier to relate to all other people. American Indians who learn about the traditional respect of the Dakota people will extend that respect across into other cultures.

Interviewer: Do you feel that offering American Indian students a cultural background will encourage them to return to the reservation after obtaining advanced degrees?

T: It may or may not encourage them to come back to the reservation to work. It depends on what the advanced degree is in. Sometimes, it seems that in the area of education, it is difficult for members to return to their community and teach, and along with it, discipline their relatives.

Interviews #5 & 6

(Includes Comments from a Community Member)

Interviewer: Do you value the cultural portion in the mission statement and how do you view that as being carried out at this college?

N: It's like important to have one because you can learn new things. I took the beading class and I didn't know how to bead at all before that. I took Dakota culture too.

Interviewer: Do you feel that taking a culture class brings you closer to the elders in your community or increases your sense of identity or your self esteem?

N: No, it just gives you a little more knowledge of the past.

Interviewer: Do you think that understanding more about your culture will help you to be more successful in another college, a mainstream college, or off the reservation?

N: Yes, but just who you are makes the most difference and is the most important part?

Interviewer: Do you think that understanding your culture and the history and the value system of the Dakota people, helps you understand other cultures and therefore get along better in multicultural world by understanding your own history and value systems?

N: Not really.

Community Member: I think the traditional cultures are dying out as we go along. That is what I try to get across to some of these elderly that kind of lean towards prejudice. It is not going to be anymore. The culture is here though. It will always be here. Preservation of the culture is good, but I don't know why they worry about that. They have to start realizing now that most kids don't even want the culture and the culture is dying because they are getting more into the White culture. All of our kids can't be enrolled because they have got the Native, but they don't have the blood. The blood is thinning.

You end up with all these people who marry each other and you end up one big happy family anyway. We don't always want that to happen either but you have to realize that it is happening. I think American Indians will come back home, but it's not going to be like it is now. The younger people are going to be more educated then the ones we have now and they are going to be able to go talk to other people and be friends and not try to put up a division (with white people). I think that it is going to be better. The way the kids are brought up, they don't know that they are Indian.

Interviewer: Well, N: what kind of courses do you think should be offered, or what kind of cultural focus should be offered at a tribal college? Do you think maybe tribal government courses would help you?

N: Yes, I know they have a dance one now and before they didn't have that, so I never got to take that.

I think the reservation is a good place to raise your kids. You hear about stuff that happens outside the reservation and it is not safe. Here you feel safe. The community here encourages education. They give you time off and they help pay for your school.

Interviewer: How about the celebrations, do you enjoy those? Like the pow-wows and things like that. Do you like them?

N: Yes, they are interesting to take little kids to. They always like listening to the drums and standing around. I don't think that I could sing or anything like that.

Interviewer: Or dance?

N: No, I could never do anything like that.

Interviewer: Well thank you. You were very helpful.

Interview #7

Interviewer: I hear that you are planning on going into elementary education. That sounds wonderful. Would you like to come back and teach on the reservation or off the reservation?

E: On the reservation.

Interviewer: That sounds good. I was wondering how you, as a student, value the cultural portion of the tribal college mission statement that says they provide quality education, but they also like to provide cultural education.

E: I think that one of the reasons why I came back to this college was because of the cultural classes that we do have here. This semester, I am taking a cultural language class. I grew up not speaking it and my parents do not speak it. I appreciate being able to come back here and learn about my language, and have the Dakota culture classes available for students to take. It is kind of good. It's there to keep us in line. We can learn it and pass it on because it's not going to be here forever. These younger people have to learn this skill and pass it on. The college makes it available and it is real good for Native students and non-Native students also that want to learn the culture. That's (inclusion of non-Native) important too.

Interviewer: Do you think that learning more about your own culture increases your self-identity and self-esteem?

E: Yes, it has. When growing up, I went to a school off the reservation. I've never got the cultural side of where we come from. Everything has come from a text-book and hearing. Nobody ever taught it to me from the beginning, so it's helped out a lot to learn more about my culture. It has made me see things differently. It also makes me understand everybody in this area.

Interviewer: Do you feel that even if you didn't take the Dakota language class or the beading, you would still be able to get a portion of your culture from the rest of the college?

E: Yes I do. It is there always. There are other things at the college that are cultural in nature.

Interviewer: Like celebrations?

E: Yes, like we had that pow-wow at Halloween. We've also had things going on, such as student activities that deal with our culture. Being around American Indians gives you the opportunity to always learn something. I've never really noticed before that everyday you learn something new. When you hang around with American Indian people who you probably wouldn't normally hang around with, you learn different things. You learn how they grew up, and how you grew up. You can share that and it all comes together.

Interviewer: Ok. It sounds like you're speaking about people who you have been able to be more connected with.

E: Yes.

Interviewer: Now, when you transfer to another institution, where do you plan to go to school for this elementary education degree?

E: They have an American Indian teaching program at the University of Utah that I am currently applying for. I don't know if it's a grant or what it is, but it's a program where they pay for your college. They are trying to recruit more American Indian teachers, and that is the reason they are doing that. They pay for your college. They have you participate in a weekly tutoring session and they keep track of you, making sure that you do finish your four-year degree.

The only requirement after you do get your degree is that you teach in an American Indian school for two years. I was planning on doing that anyway.

Interviewer: Do you feel that there is value in attending this college in Utah that is specifically for American Indian elementary teachers because it would help you learn more how to teach American Indian students?

E: I believe so, because it is dealing with mostly American Indians. Last year I did a research paper on American Indian drop-out rates, and I know that one of the main things is giving the meaning to that student. Like I said, I was going to school off the reservation, and a lot of those teachers probably didn't know how I was raised or

anything dealing with me or other students that lived out here. Whereas, if you were to have an American Indian teacher, they would know what was going on, how things were. They would probably have a better understanding. There were times that I felt some things weren't right or that they didn't understand what I was trying to say. It might have come out in my grades. I think it would help if there were American Indian teachers or at least people who were raised around here. We have one instructor (non-native) here that was raised out here and taught out here her whole life. She knows how we are. That helps out with her teaching here. She understands how things are and I think that helps out a lot with that program. Every year this college in Utah picks out about 12 American Indian students, and they make sure that they do get that degree. There will be American Indian students from other places. You could always learn something from them too.

Interviewer: I hope that you get picked, it sounds wonderful. I was wondering if you feel like this cultural heritage that you are learning about increases students' sense of responsibility. Does it increase the sense of pride and make people want to act more responsible?

E: I think so, because you are learning a lot of how it was and how it used to be and how things are suppose to be. You are learning that you are supposed to teach the younger generation. And I think that once people realize from the teachings of the Dakota culture and language, how things were back then, and how they should be now, that a lot of the students see that we need to start getting back to those old ways and teaching our younger kids our culture and our language.

Interviewer: Do you think that these classes will help the younger people like you, become involved in the tribal government? Do you feel that if you get enough of a cultural background, it would make you a better leader in the community?

E: I believe so, just by getting to know things. Like I said before, you always learn something new everyday and I don't think that you could ever have enough of anything. As far as the cultural part of your learning, it definitely helps. There is a lot of different things that I did not know about the reservation when we all moved this way. I

didn't know specific things that had happened, but knowing has helped me get a better understanding of all the reservations in North Dakota and I think it would help with politics and tribal government.

Interviewer: One last question... How about if this Utah thing doesn't happen and you decide that you want to attend a non-Native college? Do you feel the cultural portion of your education here will help you get along better at a main-stream college that doesn't focus on American Indian culture.

E: I don't think I would have any problem getting along in a main-stream college with it or without it. I've been in the military, and it has hopefully helped to have been in different places.

I think every student that does leave here would be able to succeed in any four year institution. I mean, not only from our culture here, but from all the specific classes and because the tribal colleges are smaller groups. Once we graduate in May, everybody can succeed, no matter where they go. I know that.

Interviewer: Do you think you would like to see more cultural courses offered here?

E: There could always be more courses, you know (you can always learn more).

Interviewer: And would you like to see the Dakota culture integrated into the general education courses that you take, like English, economics and things or doesn't it make any difference.

E: No, it doesn't have to go that far. Because, once we do leave, we are not going to get drums or something like that. Our knowledge of our cultural heritage is just something to help us easily make that transition from here to whatever four-year institution we go to.

Interviewer: Well, thank you so much for all your help.

Interview #8

Interviewer: Have you taken any Dakota culture classes?

K: I have taken Dakota language. I have also helped with the drying corn and drying meat sessions when they had them here. They were like little studies given to the community. We also had a stick game.

Interviewer: Oh, that sounds good. Do you value this cultural mission of tribal colleges; do you think that it is really important to have a cultural mission?

K: Well, I personally feel that having a cultural mission brings the students to have more self esteem.

Interviewer: Would you think that these cultural studies should be taught in separate classes or do you think they should be incorporated into all the general education classes that are going to transfer to all the other institutions--like English, algebra, and science classes--or do you think that they should be taught separately like Dakota culture and Dakota beading and Dakota language

K: I would love to see a cultural component in each of the studies that are offered here at the college.

Interviewer: Ok, do you think that these cultural based classes help prepare American Indian students to work in tribal government offices or in tribal businesses?

K: I would say that they do.

Interviewer: Why do you think so?

K: Because it helps the younger generation deal with the older generations who have had no college education. Often the older people speak the Dakota language or they are following a traditional way of life.

Interviewer: Do you think that having knowledge of one's cultural background will increase one's self-esteem or self-identity when they go to mainstream colleges to get a more advanced degree?

K: Traditionally, an American Indian has normally held back from making their expressions known. They are kind of sublime. I feel that a stronger knowledge of their culture would increase their confidence and help them in their speech to be able to communicate better in a non-Indian organization and culture.

Interviewer: Do you think that knowledge of cultural backgrounds will encourage students to come back to the reservation and work after they have grown and completed their education?

K: Well, I feel that once they have completed whatever degree they have been trying to obtain off the reservation, that the majority of them always make the expression that they want to return back to encourage or help their tribe. I would guess that more than 75% of them would come back.

Interviewer: How about the celebrations--like the pow-wows and the drummers and the Dakota language prayers used at celebrations? Do you feel that these have a benefit to the students and the community?

K: Using the drum is good in any celebration. It is the beat of the drum and they say that it is the heartbeat. Like if a person is following the heartbeat of the drum, it puts them in a mood and it makes them know that whatever they are doing is coming from the heart.

Interviewer: Well thank you, thanks a lot.

Interview #9

Interviewer: How do you see the cultural mission implemented at this college?

F: I guess, speaking from my own experience, I have had a lot of young families that come through here. Currently, about 2/3 of our students are women and most of them are young mothers. There are not many men attending.

Interviewer: Do you see that as a challenge, probably, as reaching the men more?

This college started back in the mid 70s, before my time, but why throughout these years, did the women feel that they need to have better educational goals than the men over time? The same opportunities are there for all the people. If you take a look at our current tribal conference, I think it's the first time in history that there are a majority of women on it. Back years ago when all the leadership roles were developed, it was probably predominately men, no matter what level of education they had. We need a lot more people, women and men, to go through their education and come back and work for the community.

Interviewer: Do you think that this knowledge of their culture is going to encourage students to come back after they have received their advanced degrees and work on the reservation to provide that opportunity for others?

F: Oh, we would like to think so. We always try to encourage the people to come back here, but one of the things that we have found out in the last couple of years is that we as a community need to have positions for them to come back for. If they go into a certain career--health careers or the business field and get their degree and we don't have some internships or something like that going on where we can give the students some experience, they might not come back if there are no positions available.

We have had a couple of people who came back after they finished their bachelor's degrees and they were persistent. They eventually found something, but some times it has taken our graduates up to a couple years after they received their degree to get what you call a permanent

position in the field they received their degree in. We have one up in tribal finance and one in the finance office in the casino that I know of and they are working in their fields, so that is nice. We should have something set up ready for them to come back to.

Interviewer: So the community is trying. How about in education then, would there be more openings in education? Is it difficult to teach in the community where you were brought up and where your relatives attend school?

F: Well, they say it is hard to teach in you own community. So, it is really up to the individual on how they approach that. To me, going back to your own community and knowing people, helps you more than it hinders you, because you know how to deal with them. You know who their family is, you might know a little bit of their background, and you might have a different approach on how to address them. Maybe there is a different way that you could help them, rather than having it hinder you. As we go out and talk to people, I can get on the phone and call the different area schools, and they all know who I am, because I have been here my whole life. If they do not know who they are talking to, sometimes they are not going to open up as much.

Interviewer: Do you think that the culture-based approach that the college places on education dealing with the Dakota culture and understanding the value system will help students that graduate from here as they go out into mainstream colleges? Do you think that will give them increased self identity and self esteem?

F: I would hope what we try to do here aside from their academics, is getting a student to be able to function on their own in an academic world. We do take extra steps to help them here. We take that extra step as far as making sure they get paperwork for scholarships turned in on time--we will go track them down. We get a list of students and if they met the qualifications and are not aware of it, they are sent a personal letter saying "Hey, you qualified for this, come back in." We will go down and visit with the students and ask them how things are going. We try to make them more aware of what other offerings there are and not only within the college here, but within the community. There are other community programs that are going to

benefit them. It isn't the college's responsibility to do that, but we do that for the benefit of the students. In this way, we are trying to make this educational process complete.

Hopefully, by the time they leave here, they say "ok, now I know I have to do a little bit of foot work to go to these other places for help with my funding or if I have questions about the degree I'm enrolled in." Once they get to the main school, they are not going to have somebody looking over their shoulders and checking their work and saying, "You signed up for the wrong courses." They will need to keep track of those themselves. One of the things that we constantly try to remind people is to look at the broader picture and to understand how it ties in.

Interviewer: Well, that sounds like the portion of the mission statement that talks about the self sufficiency, the goal of students' self sufficiency, and independence through academic achievement.

Interviewer: Where do you see the cultural mission at the college going in the future? Do you think that more classes should be added?

F: I think that we are OK. We probably do need to expand on some of those offerings, but at the same time, the students have to realize, from an academic standpoint, what kind of work you have to do to get a bachelor's degree. What kind of work do you have to do to go on to your master's degree? We can offer a lot of our courses and teaching some of these things is good, but it is not the answer to what students think about education. They have to be excited about education from the time they are in grade school on up.

Interviewer: Do you think that it would help to make them more excited about education if like drums are used in math or indigenous economics, or if they are able to study about their culture in literature? Do you think that would make it more relevant to them or do you think that it wouldn't make any difference for the younger people?

F: I would hope it would help to get people more interested in how we got here, why we are here, and how we are going to move forward--how our reservation came into being, why

we are here as a community, and what we can do to hopefully make better offerings for our kids, our next generations coming up. How can we improve on what we have now especially in the educational field? I had a daughter graduate from here last spring and I will push my children to get more education that I have had. Neither one of my parents have graduated from high school. That is what we are here for. I watched my brother come through the GED program, if the opportunity wasn't local here, he probably wouldn't have done it. I myself worked underneath a former grant that was here, and if the opportunity wasn't here for me to attend school, I probably wouldn't have finished my associate degree. It was just convenient to be in the community and the instructors that I had, and the personnel I talked to back then, were flexible. They didn't waive anything, but they worked with us and with the schedules that we had. They knew we were all raising families and working to make a living. We were still required to get to work on time but every now and then you couldn't make that class time. They worked with us in different ways to make sure that we were able to get that work done. That was the nice part about being here.

Here we always try to make a better way of handling those situations to where the student might not have to miss as much. We make suggestions to students all the time on how to do some processes better. They are only suggestions, because when students get here, they are adults. We try to offer some options they never thought of, but it is still up to them to choose. We try to make them understand that they are the adult and they still have to choose, but maybe there are some options they haven't thought of yet. We've hopefully been able to help some people through college this way. Hopefully if we do a little bit extra for those students here, by the time they leave here, they can do some of that on their own.

We may get a green house here that will be for the college and the community. Many of the elderly people like to grow things. That is all part of us getting integrated into the community. Bringing people in on community projects has nothing to do with paying dues. It's just that we are part of the community. If they, or if they have some children or grandchildren that might be interested in an education, no matter what their age, we will see how we can help them with it. We have had a couple of people in their 40 and 50

coming in for their first time and taking classes. That is a good example of how we help.

Interviewer: Thank you for your valuable insights and information.

Interview #10

Interviewer: How do you feel about the importance of having cultural instruction in tribal colleges--like having Dakota language, Dakota culture, and beading, and do you feel there should be a cultural focus in many of the general education classes?

U: Yeah, I feel that it is very important because a lot of the American Indian people don't carry it on, and it's got to be taught back.

Interviewer: It would be lost if it is not I suppose.

U: Yes.

Interviewer: Have you taken any cultural courses?

U: I have taken Dakota language, culture, and beading.

Interviewer: Are there any others that you would like to take? Would you like to take any on tribal government and work toward being a tribal leader someday?

U: I am not really into tribal government.

Interviewer: How about dance or any of those.

U: Well, I wouldn't mind taking those.

Interviewer: How about bustle making?

U: Yes, making of the regalia. That would be pretty interesting.

Interviewer: Should culture be taught as specific courses, like as beading or language and things like that or should it be in every course, like in economics and English and math and things like that?

U: I think they should be separate, because then they get more in depth on that certain subject. I took a hide tanning class and you need to focus on that as you do the other classes. I do think it would make the general education courses more relevant if there were cultural components brought into them too.

Interviewer: Do you think that it is necessary for future tribal leaders to have these cultural courses?

U: Yes, I do, so that they are sharper about issues pertaining to American Indians.

Interviewer: Do you think that it because it is important for tribal leaders to know what has happened in the past?

U: Yes, that is what I am trying to say. It is important that they know what has happened in the past and that they are aware of it.

Interviewer: Do you feel that a knowledge of one's past culture increase self esteem and self identity?

U: Yes, I think it makes you more aware of whom you are and where you came from and also more proud of whom you are. You learn about how your tribe withstood hardships that they went through.

Interviewer: Do you believe that if American Indian students learn more about their culture, it will encourage them to come back to reservation after they have obtained advanced degrees.

U: I think that is almost more on a personal note and knowledge of culture may not make any difference in the decision. When they go the education route, they may want to achieve more off the reservation, but then again they might want to come back and help the Native people. It might not make any difference whether they had cultural courses at the college or not.

Interviewer: Do you feel that the cultural focus of the college will help young people have a stronger connection with Elderly?

U: Yes, it does because it just goes back to knowing where you stand and that you should respect them.

Interviewer: Do you think a greater knowledge of one's culture increases your success in mainstream colleges and off the reservation?

U: No, I think it is a personal thing.

Interviewer: How about success in Employment off reservation?

U: I am not sure about that.

Interviewer: How about the ability to function more successfully in a multicultural world?

U: Yes, definitely because knowing where you came from gives you more respect for their differences in others it increases understanding of diverseness.

Interviewer: Do you see value in the cultural celebrations that are held at the college and include the entire community?

U: I like them because they bring the people together. When they use drums at graduation, it keeps that part alive. It is like with the Dakota prayer that is said at most of the celebrations, you know it's there even if you don't understand it.

Interviewer: Do you have any other comments?

U: Just that the cultural courses I have taken have broadened my knowledge of this tribe. I have lived here for the last 15 years and didn't know anything about the culture until I came to the college. It is good for me, because if someone asks me something about the culture, I know how to answer. I can also pass it on to my children.

Interviewer: Thank you so much.

Interviews #s 11 and 12

Interviewer: How do you feel about the importance of the cultural instruction at a tribal college?

D: It should be mandatory for tribal colleges so you know more about your background. Like myself, I really didn't know too much about my culture because I am one of the younger generations. I am glad I took the classes here to help me.

Q: Yes, I think it's important because I feel that a lot of students, even though they are American Indian and attend college here, don't know we have Dakota culture here. I am not aware of how we used to live a long time ago. Painting and quilting are things we did a long time ago and they are a part of our heritage. I think it is good to have cultural instruction here, and I am glad that it is mandatory for a two year program.

Interviewer: What types of courses have you taken or would you like to see offered?

D: Well, I am going to be taking beading. I have taken Dakota culture and Dakota language and I would like to take bustle making and dance outfit accessory making.

Interviewer: Would you like to take any courses pertaining to tribal government or tribal law and work towards becoming a leader?

D: Yes, I know that they do have the degree here, but it's just not offered. The classes aren't offered to complete it.

Q: Well, I didn't take any yet, but next semester, I am taking beading, Dakota Language, and American Indian dancing.

D: American Indian dancing is listed as a physical activity.

Interviewer: Do you think that this cultural aspect should be brought into every course--like in math, using a drum for cylinders. Should it be brought into the general education courses? like English, math and science and

things like that or should the cultural courses be taught sort of separately, like beading and things? Which way do you think would be best?

D: Both I think, you know, not gearing your math all towards it, but a little--using cultural examples when possible.

Q: I also think both. I think it would help American Indian students if you use cultural examples--especially in math. Yes, I think it should be both.

Interviewer: Do you feel that this culture-based instruction is necessary to prepare Indian students for future roles in tribal government?

D: Sure, because if you have it in your economics class, you could relate it to something that is happening to your reservation and land and stuff. It would be helpful.

Interviewer: Do you think knowledge of one's cultural heritage has any connection for students to return to the community?

D: Yes, because if you are like me, you have hardly any knowledge of the culture and your heritage and as you find out more about it, it makes you feel proud. It makes you feel respected and empowered by the knowledge of the myths and legends that have happened.

Q: I think that it helps when, you are aware of your culture, like here, we're Dakota, and we were taught to be humble. When you live that way you respect things and you're open minded. You are proud and you don't want to disappoint the people around you.

Interviewer: Do American Indians feel that they have increased self-esteem and self-identity that will help them succeed in other colleges because of this cultural background?

D: Yes, because they are proud and know who they are.

Interviewer: Do you feel like the cultural focus of the college should be increased, decreased or remain about the same?

D: Increased

Q: Increased

Interviewer: Increased in what areas?

D: In the courses and activities--in course offerings and within the general education courses. It should also remain in celebrations of cultural holidays and activities.

Interviewer: Do you feel this cultural focus brings a greater connection between elders and youth?

D: Yes.

Q: Yes, definitely.

D: In how the youth treat elders. They are highly respected, but not a lot of people respect them as much as they are supposed to.

Q: That is true, a lot of them don't respect elders enough and I think if we incorporate more into the college and even the grade school--more into the younger generations, they would have more respect for their elders.

Interviewer: And who do you consider elders?

Q: I suppose age 55 and over. I think that when we talk about respect for elders in school there is greater connection, but a lot of it comes from the home. But if it is an education requirement and you have to sit in class and you have to do that work, well then you're going to listen, you know. And that's always going to be in your head if you listen. So, I think it's important that we do have cultural classes and celebrations.

Interviewer: Do you feel that learning more about your culture will increase your success in more advanced colleges, like main-stream colleges?

D: I don't think it would make any difference.

Q: I don't think so either.

Interviewer: Ok. Would it increase your success in employment positions off the reservation?

D: No.

Q: No, I don't think so.

Interviewer: How about your ability to function successfully in a multi-cultural world?

D: Yes, especially with minorities, because just being a minority helps you to be more understanding.

Q: Yes because it would make you more respectful of their cultures, you know and more understanding of their differences.

Interviewer: How about the celebrations, like graduations and pow wows, where they have the drum and the prayer said in the Dakota language and the flags. What do you think about that?

D: Well, I think that when we have a pow-wow, we are always honoring somebody, like our veterans. It's a good thing to have at the college.

Q: It's a good thing because when we have a pow-wow, it brings good feelings. We are happy to be together and our families are there. Then we get to see our relatives, the ones we don't get to see everyday, and the songs that they sing, are like songs that our grandfathers sang along time ago. It just brings a place of togetherness where we are happy or we are celebrating on somebody. I think it is a good thing here at the college, and I wish we could have more of them.

D: More community activities is a good idea. We could have the community come in and learn how to bead or make moccasins or try to tan some hide, stuff like that.

Interviewer: Like maybe offer courses like that without credits?

D: Yes.

Interviewer: Ok, do you think they should teach the Dakota language here, and why?

Q: Because, I believe that, like in forty years, our language will be lost. My mother is like 47, and she can understand the language and she can speak only parts of it, but she is not fluent. I understand the colors and the numbers and just a few other basic words. When I hear my grandparents talk, I can check out little words that they are saying, but they are so fast.

We have a limited numbers of members in our tribe and if you don't carry it on, it will be lost forever unless we get a tape recorder and tape our elders right now. That might be a possible way to preserve it.

D: That's like at my grandma's, she tells us stories from a long time ago and she records them. Then she will talk in Indian, and she will say a prayer, like Amazing Grace or different prayers. She says them in Indian, and then she will translate them.

Interviewer: Oh, how nice.

D: We have tapes of where she tells us stories from a long time ago when she grew up. She says that it's a part of our heritage and that's something that she doesn't ever want to be lost.

Q: Yes, and that goes for singing too. It is strong in our culture and that's one way that we express ourselves--like we honor someone--and that is really important.

Interviewer: Well thank you girls, you did a great job.

Interview #13

Interviewer: How do you value the cultural portion of the mission statement here or do you think it is probably not even necessary as long as the educational goals are met?

Q: Learning culture is absolutely essential.

Interviewer: The Dakota culture

Q: Yes, learning their own culture gives them a sense of identity. When they out in the world it helps them deal with it. Actually, if we were living in a culture as a minority we would want to know about our culture. It helps you differentiate yourself.

Interviewer: How do you see this college as fulfilling their cultural mission in term of offering classes, integrating it in gen. ed. classes, or doing community things like pow wows?

Q: I see that we offer more classes that are cultural based. I would like to see that more mixed, like in our American Indian Dance class this semester; it would be nice to mix in some other cultural dances too.

Interviewer: Do you think it is important for the instructors, whether American Indian or not, to understand the community culture?

Q: I think instructors need to look at the history. As I have been here, I have learned more. I try to bring culture into my classes. Instead of asking how a business in Japan would do something differently, I ask how a reservation business would do it differently.

Interviewer: Do you bring in culture with definite activities like that or do you also feel that you address cultural differences in their learning styles.

Q: I look at their learning styles too. I try to address different learning styles.

Interviewer: Do you think all this cultural knowledge will help to make students more responsible in their community

and school. Does it help that they understand how they came to be in the situation they are in.

Q: Yes, if they understand their culture even farther back before the treaties. Like how tribes governed themselves before that?

Interviewer: As an instructor, is it difficult to include cultural activities?

Q: yes, it is, but it is important to not be afraid to ask or make mistakes. Sometimes I add things about my Irish culture. They were badly treated by the immigrants too.

Interviewer: Will cultural knowledge help students to understand and deal with multicultural environments when they leave the reservation?

Q: Yes, they will understand why. It might not help them to like the results but they understand why.

Interviewer: Do you think understanding culture will help them to come back to the reservation to work after obtaining advanced degrees

Q: Yes, if they understand their culture they will know why the challenges are there and if they see that other cultures have the same type of situations and if then if they see how other cultures solve the problem they can come back with the solution

Interviewer: Do you think it benefits students when transferring to other colleges that they have attended a tribal college first.

Q: I think this college prepares the students well for transfer and offers them a good transition. Actually, many of the students attending here probably would have a problem if they entered a mainstream college first. That is not because of any lack of intelligence, only because of cultural differences. Like when we were in the military it was a difficult transition from one place to another so they would actually give us a seminar on the cultural differences of the next community. The main disadvantage of attending school here first is that other colleges often

don't realize what a quality education the students receive here.

Interview #14

Interviewer: How do you see that this college fulfills its cultural mission and how do you think it should be fulfilled?

K: Part of what we are supposed to be doing as instructors here is to incorporate culture into our classes where it is appropriate and where we can. As far as I know, all our instructors try to do that. Some classes lend themselves more easily to that than others.

Interviewer: The instructor manuals don't have ideas for an instructor on this. Do you think that might be even more difficult for a non-Indian instructor to do because they don't know the tradition and could even teach it incorrectly?

K: Yes, you need to be creative. The texts that you use don't have anything in there. As far as I know, all instructors try to do that.

Interviewer: Do you think that the fact that students have a cultural basis helps to increase their self esteem and identity because they understand more about their past. Does it help them when they go on to another college?

K: I think it helps them. Anytime you learn something, it helps you. Unfortunately, at this point, some students just see Dakota Culture as a requirement for graduation and take it for that reason. I would like to see them take it because they think it is relevant to where they live. When I was in college, I had the same attitude so it is probably normal. They feel the same way about taking a math requirement. When they get older they will see why it is important when they start using the information. You just need to tell them why it is important to learn things in all courses to make you a more well rounded person in all these different areas. This is a goal in all of education in general is to make you a more productive member of your community.

Interviewer. Did you go to school here?

K: No, I went straight to UND.

Interviewer: Do you think you would have had some benefit to attending here first?

K: I definitely would have, but this college was not here at that time. It was a small building that didn't appeal to me at that time. If it would have been in this setting I would have.

Interviewer: How do you as an American Indian instructor bring cultural components into your science classes?

K: I am currently working with the Dakota Language instructor. I have submitted a list of items to her that I would like to have her give me the Dakota names. These are for anatomy-type things that would be relevant to the students. The same thing could work with Geography and rocks or weather terms--wherever it is relevant.

Interviewer: You are American Indian and understand the culture of this community. Without bringing cultural items into the classroom, do you feel that part of the cultural mission of the college is for the instructors to understand the culture of the people here when they teach?

K: Yes, I do. I think that we don't do enough about different learning styles and I feel that American Indians do tend to have a more visual, hands-on learning style. Probably more training in that area could be given to the people who work with the students.

Interviewer: Do you think that having a background in their own culture will help students to want to return to their reservation like you did after obtaining advanced degrees?

K: In the past 15 years or so since I have graduated from college, I think that all the people who I have known have come back to the reservation to work after obtaining their degrees.

Interviewer: Why do you think that is?

K: I think it is because they want to help the community and besides, "this is home." And because it is harder for American Indians to function off the reservation.

Interviewer: Do you think that understanding more about themselves and their history will help American Indians to function more successfully off the reservation in a multicultural society—whether it is at a mainstream college, at a workplace, or in a community?

K: Yes, if you understand more about yourself you can function better in any society—there is that component, but more importantly, those people off the reservation, non-American Indians need to have a better understanding of American Indians.

Interviewer: Does pride in one's culture make one want to act more responsibly?

K: I think that how you present yourself isn't because you are proud because you are American Indian, but because you have high self esteem.

Interviewer: Thank you for everything.

K: You are welcome; you can use my name too. I might get famous☺

Interviewer: Do you want the language preserved?

K: The most important thing is probably the language and of course your stories, your legends, traditions, beliefs, but you need the language preserved. It needs to be practiced.

Interview # 15

Interviewer: How do you as a younger person value the cultural portion of the mission statement--history, value system, etc. of the tribal college?

M: I don't actually value the cultural mission at all. it doesn't have any effect on me.

Interviewer: Do you think there is any value in learning about your history etc.

M: The culture classes that I took valued me. I wouldn't have taken if it wasn't required.

Interviewer: Do you think the learning about your culture will have any impact on self esteem or identity?

M: Not now, but maybe later on in life.

Interviewer: Will it affect how you do in a mainstream college or later in life (success wise)

M: I felt more comfortable going to a tribal college. It was a good place to start. I felt comfortable being around my people.

Interviewer: Will it make you feel like moving back to the reservation when you get older?

M: In a way it does, because there aren't a lot of educated American Indians here and we need to set an example for our younger generation and be role models. It all depends on where the money is and if my family wants to come back here and live.

Interviewer: It sounds as if you feel that you would come back more to encourage others to be educated rather than to preserve the culture. The importance of coming back here is because you think education rather than culture is the key to improving the community. Which cultural courses you would like to take if you could or what you think would be good to offer.

M: Beading was fun and interesting to learn. It was easy and now I can make things that the elders made back then. It does give me a connection to my grandparents

Interviewer: Do you think it is important for the college to connect with community by holding traditional ceremonies

M: I attend them every year, so I do value them. Yes, or if they have American Indian games they can encourage people to play. We went to a conference in New Mexico and one of the things our college didn't have was competition in American Indian games. It was fun to watch people from other tribes playing them for competition.

Interviewer: Do you feel the cultural focus at the college should: increase, decrease, or be kept the same? Should culture be integrated into general education courses?

M: Yes, have more classes focus on history, tribal law, and economics. I only had to take Dakota culture and that was more focused on this region. Integration in general education course would probably not make much difference or make them more interesting.

Interviewer: Do the offering of culture-based courses attract older students?

M: Everyone is different, Many, even my age, are more interested in learning about their culture. I want to wait, but it is best that they keep offering these courses for people who want to learn about it today.

Interviewer: Will Learning about how American Indians are where they are help one to be more understanding in multicultural world with Negroes, White, etc.

M: I want to learn about it, how we first came about; the only thing I am worried about is if I would judge these people (White people) because of what happened. I am not racist.

APPENDIX E

SURVEY I

1. Most effective way this college fulfills cultural mission, (Rank 1-3 with 1 being most important)
 - ☐ Offering courses such as beading and Dakota Language
 - ☐ Community relations--hosting pow wows and games
 - ☐ Extra cultural activities, Indian soup, tipi raising
 - ☐ Bringing culture into classes
 - ☐ Staff and faculty that understand Dakota way of life
 - ☐ Traditional ceremonies such as graduations
2. What is most important to you to preserve? (Rank 1-3 with 1 being most important)
 - ☐ Dakota Language
 - ☐ Dakota Culture
 - ☐ Dakota History
 - ☐ Dakota Art
 - ☐ Dakota religion
3. Does knowledge of one's own culture increase the chances of success when attending a mainstream college?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
4. Will knowledge of Dakota culture encourage people to return to the reservation after obtaining advanced degrees?
 - ☐ yes
 - ☐ no
5. Is cultural instruction and knowledge of one's culture necessary for leaders in tribal government?
 - ☐ yes
 - ☐ no
6. Does knowledge of one's culture increase one's sense of identity?
 - ☐ yes
 - ☐ No

7. Does knowledge of one's culture increase one's self esteem?

☐ yes

☐ No

8. Does knowledge of one's own culture help one to accept diversity in others in this multicultural world?

☐ yes

☐ No

9. Age

☐ 20-30

☐ 31-40

☐ 41-50

☐ Over 50

10. Gender

☐ Male

☐ Female

11. How do you feel about the following idea?

"Culture is currently a very important part of this tribal college. Culture should not be ADDED to the curriculum, but the curriculum should be implemented within the culture."

APPENDIX F

SURVEY II

The Dakota Cultural Gathering last weekend bought out some additional concepts that I would like to have your opinion on for my dissertation. I will try to make sure this is the last time I ask you to take a survey. Thank you so much for all your assistance in my doctoral program. LoAnn

Age:

- ☐ 20-30
- ☐ 31-40
- ☐ 41-50
- ☐ 50-

Gender:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Preserving the Dakota language is necessary for preserving the Dakota culture:

- ☐ yes
- ☐ no

My ability with the Dakota language falls into the following category:

- ☐ none
- ☐ Can speak and understand a few words
- ☐ Fluent

I feel that it is important to me that the Dakota language is preserved:

- ☐ yes
- ☐ no

In the future:

- ☐ I would like to learn to speak and understand a few words in the Dakota language
- ☐ I would like to learn to understand and speak the Dakota language fluently
- ☐ I don't intend to learn the Dakota language

For my children, I would like them to be taught:

- ☐ to speak and understand a few words in the Dakota language
- ☐ to understand and speak the Dakota language fluently
- ☐ I don't see any need for them to learn the Dakota language

Can you think of any additional culture-based courses that you would like to see offered at this college?

APPENDIX G

CONSENT FORM

Perception of the Cultural Focus of the College Mission by
Students at a Tribal College

You are invited to participate in a research study being done by LoAnn Nelson and the Education Department at the University of North Dakota. The results will be used in a doctoral dissertation.

Tribal Colleges are unique in their dual missions to promote tribal culture traditions and also to provide traditional Western learning. The purpose of this research is to determine if North Dakota American Indian students attending Life Circle Tribal College feel they benefit from the value that Tribal Colleges place on enabling American Indian students to explore and learn about the traditional culture of their individual tribes.

Any information from this study that can be identified with an individual will remain confidential unless they would like to be quoted.

Participation is completely voluntary and you are free to leave the study at any time.

If you have any questions about this project, please call me at (701) 662-1531. If you have any other questions or concerns, please call the Research Development and compliance office at (701) 777-4279.

You will be given a copy of this consent form for future reference.

All of my questions have been answered and I am encouraged to ask any questions that I may have concerning this study in the future.

Participants Signature

Date _____

APPENDIX H

Courses Listed in the Catalog	
Accounting (ACCT)	
ACCT 200—Elements of Accounting I	ACCT 201—Elements of Accounting II
ACCT 207—Managerial Accounting	ACCT 212—Payroll Accounting
ACCT 231—Income Tax Procedures	
Agricultural Economics (AGEC)	
AGEC 141—Introduction to Agribusiness Management	
Agriculture (AGRI)	
AGRI 299—Special Topics in Agriculture	
Animal and Range Science (ARSC)	
ARSC 114—Introduction to Animal Science	ARSC 123—Feeds and Feeding
ARSC 236—Introduction to Range Management	ARSC 260—Horse Production
Fine Arts (ART)	
ART 110—Introduction to the Visual Arts	ART 111—Understanding Art
ART 122—Two-Dimensional Design	ART 124—Three Dimensional Design
ART 124B—Beading	ART 124Q—Quilting
ART 130—Drawing I	ART 140—Crafts I
ART 200—Art Activities	ART 220—Painting I
ART 221—Painting II	ART 230—Drawing II
ART 299—Special Topics in Art	
Automotive and Diesel Technology (AUTO)	
AUTO 111—Engine Fundamentals	AUTO 112—Engine Overhaul
AUTO 148—Suspension & Steering Theory	AUTO 158—Brakes
AUTO 161—Electronics	AUTO 162—Electrical Systems
AUTO 181—Fuel Systems	AUTO 182—Computer Controls
AUTO 221—Automatic Transmission Fundamentals	AUTO 222—Automatic Transmission Hydraulics Principles
AUTO 223—Automatic Transmission Overhaul/Diagnosis	AUTO 224—Automatic Transmission electronic Controls
AUTO 238—Manual Drivelines	AUTO 278—Heating and Air Conditioning
AUTO 288—Engine Performance II	AUTO 299—Special Topics
TECH 238—Welding	
Business Administration (BADM)	
BADM 202—Principles of Management	BADM 224—Management Information

	Systems
Biology (BIOL)	
BIOL 111/111L—Concepts of Biology/Lab	BIOL 124/124L—Environmental Science I/Lab
BIOL 150/150L—General Biology I/Lab	BIOL 151/151L—General Biology II/Lab
BIOL 170/170L—General Zoology	BIOL 220/220L—Anatomy and Physiology I/Lab
BIOL 221/221L—Anatomy and Physiology II/Lab	BIOL 299—Special Topics
Business Office Technology & Education (BOTE)	
BOTE 102—Basic Keyboarding	BOTE 127—Information Processing
BOTE 147—Word Processing	BOTE 152—Intermediate Keyboarding
BOTE 188—Computerized Accounting	BOTE 209/309—Office Management
BOTE 210/310—Business Communications	BOTE 214/314—Business Reports and Communications
BOTE 217/317—Records Management	BOTE 218/318—Desktop Publishing
BOTE 247—Spreadsheet Applications	BOTE 257—Database
BOTE 275/375—Administrative Office Procedures	BOTE 277—PowerPoint
BOTE 299—Special Topics	
Carpentry (CARP)	
CARP 100—Carpentry Core Curriculum	CARP 101—Carpentry Level One A
CARP 101—Carpentry Level One B	CARP 200—On-Site One
CARP 201—On-Site Two	
Chemistry (CHEM)	
CHEM 115/115L—Introductory Chemistry/Lab	CHEM 116/116L—Introduction to Organic and Biochemistry/Lab
CHEM 121/121L—General Chemistry I/Lab	CHEM 122/122L—General Chemistry II/Lab
CHEM 299—Special Topics	
Computer Information Systems (CIS)	
CIS 101—Computer Literacy	CIS 106—Computer Applications
CIS 115—Internet	CIS 160—Operating System—Windows
CIS 180—Creating Web Site Development & Design	CIS 219—Microcomputer Hardware
Communications (COMM)	
COMM 110—Fundamentals of Public Speaking	COMM 200—Introduction to Media Writing
COMM 299—Special Topics in Speech	
Cooperative Education (COOP)	
COOP 101, 102, 201, 202—Cooperative Education	

Computer Science (CSCI)	
CSCI 101—Introduction to Computers	CSCI 299—Special Topics in Computer Science
Dakota Studies (DS)	
DS 101—Intro to Spirit Lake Sioux	DS 108—Dakota Thought and Philosophy
DS 110—Dakota Culture	DS 201—Oral Tribal History
DS 231—Native American Dance Forms	DS 299—Special Topics in Dakota Studies
Dakota Language (DSL)	
DSL 107 (ENGL 161)—Dakota Language I	DSL 108 (ENGL 162)—Dakota Language II
DSL 299—Conversational Dakota I	DSL 210—Conversational Dakota II
DSL 299—Special Topics in Dakota Language	
Economics (ECON)	
ECON 201—Principles of Microeconomics	ECON 202 Principles of Macroeconomics
ECON 299—Special Topics in Economics	
Early Childhood Education (EDU)	
EDU 100—Introduction to Early Childhood Education	EDU 217—Early Childhood Experiences: Language and Literacy
EDU 218—Early Childhood Experiences in Mathematics and Science	EDU 231—Infants and Toddlers
EDU 233—Early Childhood Education Curriculum	EDU 236—Positive Child Guidance
EDU 237—Young Children With Special Needs	EDU 276—Child Developmental Practicum
EDU 277—Child Developmental Practicum	
English (ENGL)	
ENGL 100—Undergraduate Master Student	ENGL 105—Technical Communications
ENGL 110—College Composition I	ENGL 120—College Composition II
ENGL 125—Introduction to Professional Writing	ENGL 211—Introduction to Creative Writing
ENGL 224—Introduction to Fiction	ENGL 265—Native American Literature
ENGL 268—American Literature	ENGL 299—Special Topics In English
Geography (GEOG)	
GEOG 121/121L—Physical Geography	GEOG 150/150L—Principles of Geography
Geology	
GEOL 101/101L—Environmental Geology	GEOL 105/105L—Physical Geology
GEOL 299—Special Topics in Geology	
History (HIST)	
HIST 103—U.S. History to 1877	HIST 104—U.S. History Since 1877
HIST 220—North Dakota History	HIST 231—American Indian History
HIST 239—U.S. and the Vietnam War	HIST 299—Special Topics in History

Health, Physical Education, Recreation (HPER)	
HPER 101—Activity: Introductory Level: Bowling, Basketball, Golf, Jogging/Walking, Volleyball, Weightlifting	
HPER 110—Sports Officiating	HPER 217—Personal and Community Health
HPER 299—Special Topics in HPER	
Horticulture (HORT)	
HORT 173—Greenhouse Technology	
Humanities (HUM)	
HUM 101—Introduction to Humanities I	HUM 102—Introduction to Humanities II
HUM 299—Special Topics in Humanities	
Indian Studies (IS)	
IS 121—Introduction to Indian Studies	IS 255—Survey of Native American Arts
Mathematics (MATH)	
MATH 102—Intermediate Algebra	MATH 103—College Algebra
MATH 120—Basic Mathematics	MATH 125—Basic Mathematics II
MATH 210—Elementary Statistics	MATH 299—Special Topics in Mathematics
Music (MUSIC)	
MUSIC 101—Fundamentals of Music	
Natural Resource Management (NAT)	
NAT 102—Introduction to Natural Resources Management	NAT 105—Wildlife Identification
NAT 205—Ecology	NAT 209—Water Resources
NAT 210—Natural Science & Culture of the Plains Indians	NAT 215—Plant Identification & Cultural Use by Regional Indians
NAT 241—Cooperative Resources	
Nutrition (NUTR)	
NUTR 240—Principles of Nutrition	
Philosophy (PHIL)	
PHIL 101—Introduction to Philosophy	PHIL 210—Ethics
Physics	
PHYS 100/100L—Concepts of PHYSICS	PHYS 110/110L—Astronomy
PHYS 130/130L—Natural Science Physics I	PHYS 211/211L—College Physics
PHYS 212/212L—College Physics II	PHYS 299—Special Topics in Physics
Plant Science	
PLSC 210/210L—Horticulture Science	PLSC 268/268L—Plant Propagation
Political Science (POLS)	
POLS 102—Tribal Administration	POLS 115—American Government
POLS 116—State and Local Government	POLS 204—Federal Indian Law
POLS 195—Student Government	POLS 299—Special Topics in Political Science
Psychology (PSYC)	

PSYC 111—Introduction to Psychology	PSYC 250—Developmental Psychology
PHYC 252—Child Psychology	PSYC 270—Abnormal Psychology
PSYC 299—Special Topics in Psychology	
Science (SCNC)	
SCNC 100—Introductory Science	SCNC 299—Special Topics in Science
Social Work (SWK)	
SWK 200—Introduction to Helping Skills	SWK—Special Topics in Science
Sociology (SOC)	
SOC 110—Sociology	SOC 115—Social Problems
SOC 220—Family	SOC 299—Special Topics in Sociology
Soil Science (SOIL)	
SOIL 210—Introduction to Soil Science	
Veterinary Science (VETS)	
VETS 239—Animal Health	

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